



Praying through LENT

February 26 - April 12, 2020

Faith Memorial Church

As we move through another Lenten season

toward Holy Week, we do so with devotional intention.

To help us in this quest, Dr. Case has provided us with daily prayers of significant individuals in Church history. These recorded prayers need not be memorized, but rather used as means of grace.

May the Holy Spirit challenge us to greater love and devotion through the meditative expressions presented by other followers of Jesus.

Jonathan W. Morgan
Pastor

FEBRUARY 26, 2020

Ash Wednesday

Faithful God, trusting in you,
we begin
the forty days of conversion and penance.
Give us the strength, for Christian discipline,
that we may renounce evil
and be decisive in doing good.
We ask this through Jesus Christ.

Henri J. M. Nouwen

FEBRUARY 27

Personal prayer is the meeting place between the Eternal One and me; the Blessed Sacrament is the visible sign of my covenant with him.

That is why I believe in personal prayer, and why every day I wait to meet him in the Eucharist. To pray means to wait for the God who comes.

Every prayer-filled day sees a meeting with the God who comes; every night which we faithfully put at his disposal is full of his presence.

And his coming and his presence are not only the result of our waiting or a prize for our efforts; they are his decision, based on his love freely poured out.

His coming is bound to his promise, not to our works or virtue. We have not earned the meeting with God because we have served him faithfully in our brethren, or because we have heaped up such a pile of virtue as to shine before Heaven.

God is thrust onward by his love, not attracted to our beauty. He comes even in moments when we have done everything wrong, when we have done nothing...when we have sinned.

From *The God Who Comes*
by Carlo Caretto

FEBRUARY 28

O Holy Spirit of God, visit now this soul of mine, and tarry within it until eventide. Inspire all my thoughts. Pervade all my imaginations. Suggest all my decisions. Lodge in my will's most inward citadel and order all my doings. Be with me in my silence and in my speech, in my haste and in my leisure, in company and in solitude, in the freshness of the morning and in the weariness of the evening, and give me grace at all times to rejoice in thy mysterious companionship.

From A Diary of Private Prayer
by John Baillie

FEBRUARY 29

I am a creature of a day, passing through life as an arrow through the air. I am a spirit come from God and returning to God: just hovering over the great gulf, till, a few moments hence, I am no more seen; I drop into an unchangeable eternity. I want to know one thing – the way to heaven; how to land safe on that happy shore. God himself has condescended to teach the way; for this very end he came from heaven. He hath written it down in a book. O give me that book! At any price, give me this book of God! I have it; here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be *homo unius libri* (a man of one book).

John Wesley

MARCH 1

Mother Teresa of Calcutta said, "Pray for me that I not loosen my grip on the hands of Jesus, even under the guise of ministering to the poor."

That is our first task: to grip the hands of Jesus with such tenacity that we are obliged to follow his lead, to seek first his kingdom.

The [next] step is so simple I am embarrassed to mention it, and yet it is so important that I must. Begin now to obey him in every way you can.

From Freedom of Simplicity
by Richard J. Foster

MARCH 2

Write thy blessed name, O Lord, upon my heart, there to remain so indelibly engraved, that no prosperity, no adversity shall ever move me from thy love. Be thou to me a strong tower of defense, a comforter in tribulation, a deliverer in distress, a very present help in trouble, and a guide to heaven through the many temptations and dangers of this life.

Thomas á Kempis

MARCH 3

Most of the discussion of prayer I have ever heard centered on whether God answers prayers and how we can know that he does. But during the past decade I have come to believe that prayer is not a matter of my calling in an attempt to get God's attention, but of my finally listening to the call of God, which has been constant, patient, and insistent in my inner being. In relationship to God, I am not the seeker, the initiator, the one who loves more greatly. In prayer, as in the whole salvation story unfolded by Scripture, God is reaching out to me, speaking to me, and it is up to me to learn to be polite enough to pay attention. When I do have something to say to God, I am rendering a response to the divine initiative. So the questions of whether or not and how God answers prayer now seem to me bogus questions. God speaks, all right. The big question is do I answer, do I respond, to an invitation that is always open.

I do not mean to imply that I have no use for liturgical or communal prayer, which serves as a concrete enactment of my oneness with the other members of the family of God. But I know, and I think every honest person knows, that communal prayers are sometimes real to my inner experience, and sometimes not, and that the difference lies in the kind of internal focus I am able to give to them.

From Speech, Silence, Action!
By Virginia Ramey Mollenkott

MARCH 4

Do nothing on which you cannot pray for a blessing. Every action of a Christian that is good is sanctified by the Word and prayer. It becomes not a Christian to do anything so trivial that he cannot pray over it.

John Wesley

Pray, just as you are led, without reasoning, in all simplicity. Be a little child, hanging on him that loves you.

John Wesley

Always remember the essence of Christian holiness is simplicity and purity: one design, one desire: entire devotion to God.

John Wesley

MARCH 5

Our response is to rejoice in the infinite happiness of God and, on a lower scale, in our own crosses and to desire still more of them, for in them we have the privilege of imitating him and proving our love, and there is nothing dearer to the heart that loves. We shall never lack either this happiness, nor God nor the Cross.

From *Meditations of a Hermit*
by Charles de Foucauld

How can one pity anyone who is doing the will of our Lord? Is there anything sweeter on earth than to do the will of him one loves? And if it gives one some trouble to carry it out, the sweeter is all the greater.

From *Meditations of a Hermit*
by Charles de Foucauld

MARCH 6

And, O Lord, grant unto me that am now about to return to the common comforts and business of the world, such moderation in all enjoyments, such diligence in honest labor, and such purity of mind that amidst the changes, miseries, or pleasures of life I may keep my mind fixed upon thee, and improve every day in grace till I shall be received into thy kingdom of eternal happiness.

From *Doctor Johnson's Prayers*
edited by Elton Trueblood

MARCH 7

Father God,

Why is it that I think I must get somewhere,

assume some position, be gathered together, or separated apart in the quiet of my study to pray?

Why is it that I feel that I have to go somewhere or do some particular act to find you, and talk with you?

Your presence is here in the city – on the busy bus, in the factory, in the cockpit of the airplane, in the hospital – in the patients' rooms, in the intensive care unit, in the waiting room; in the home – at dinner, in the bedroom, in the family room, at my workbench; in the car – in the parking lot, at the stoplight.

Lord, reveal your presence to me everywhere, and help me become aware of your presence each moment of the day.

May your presence fill the non-answers, empty glances, and lonely times of my life. Amen.

From A Thirty-Day Experiment in Prayer
by Robert Wood

MARCH 8

The biblical Christian can only pray empty-handed, as the thirteenth-century Dominican preacher William Peraldus expressed it. Or, as Augustine observed, “The best disposition for praying is that of being desolate, forsaken, stripped of everything.” Unlike the ritualist, we know that any sacrifice we bring before God is stained by sin and therefore unworthy of acceptance apart from the mediation and intercession of Jesus Christ. Our hope depends not on the right technique or the proper phrase or gesture, which borders on magic, but on the promises of God to look with favor on those who throw themselves on his mercy and who acknowledge the efficacy of the atoning sacrifice of his son, Jesus Christ, for their redemption.

As I see it, true prayer is neither mystical rapture nor ritual observance nor philosophical reflection. It is the outpouring of the soul before a living God, the crying to God “out of the depths.” Such prayer can only be uttered by one convicted of sin by the grace of God and moved to confession by the Spirit of God. True prayer is an encounter with the Holy in which we realize not only our creatureliness and guilt but also the joy of knowing that our sins are forgiven through the atoning death of the divine savior, Jesus Christ. In such an encounter, we are impelled not only to bow before God and seek his mercy but also to offer thanksgiving for grace that goes out to undeserving sinners.

From *The Struggle of Prayer*
by Donald G. Bloesch

MARCH 9

Lord, I know not what I ought to ask of thee;

thou only knowest what I need...I simply present myself before thee, I open my heart to thee. Behold my needs which I know not myself. Smite, or heal; depress me, or raise me up, I adore all thy purposes without knowing them; I am silent; I offer myself in sacrifice; I yield myself to thee; I would have no other desire than to accomplish thy will. Teach me to pray. Pray thyself in me. Amen.

Francois Fenelon

MARCH 10

O God, you are the fountain of all truth; we ask you to protect your church from all false teaching.

Protect the church

From all teaching and preaching which would destroy men's faith; from all that removes the old foundations without putting anything in their place; from all that confuses the simple, that perplexes the seeker, that bewilders the way-faring man.

And yet at the same time protect the Church from the failure to face new truth; from devotion to words and ideas which the passing of the years has rendered unintelligible; from all intellectual cowardice and from mental lethargy and sloth.

O God, send to your Church teachers, whose minds are wise with wisdom; whose hearts are warm with love; whose lips are eloquent with truth.

Send to your Church teachers whose desire is to build and not to destroy; who are adventurous with the wise, and yet gentle with the simple; who strenuously exercise the intellect, and who yet remember that the heart has reasons of its own.

Give to your Church preachers and teachers who can make known the Lord Christ to others because they know him themselves; and give to your Church hearers, who being freed from prejudice will follow truth as blind men long for light. This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

From Prayers for the Christian Year
by William Barclay

MARCH 11

Merton once told me to quit trying so hard in prayer. He said: "How does an apple ripen? It just sits in the sun." A small green apple cannot ripen in one night by tightening all its muscles, squinting its eyes and tightening its jaw in order to find itself the next morning miraculously large, red, ripe, and juicy beside its small green counterparts. Like the birth of a baby or the opening of a rose, the birth of the true self takes place in God's time. We must wait for God, we must awake; we must trust in his hidden action within us.

From Merton's Place of Nowhere
by James Finley

MARCH 12

O God, we thank you for all those in whose words and in whose writings your truth has come to us. For the historians, the psalmists and the prophets, who wrote the Old Testament. For all who wrote the Gospels and the Letters of the New Testament; for all who in every generation have taught and explained and expounded and preached the word of Scripture: We thank you, O God.

Grant, O God, that no false teaching may ever have any power to deceive us or to seduce us from the truth. Grant, O God, that we may never listen to any teaching which would encourage us to think sin less serious, vice more attractive, or virtue less important; grant, O God, that we may never listen to any teaching which would dethrone Jesus Christ from the topmost place; grant, O God, that we may never listen to any teaching which for its own purposes perverts the truth.

O God, our Father, establish us immovably in the truth. Give us minds which can see at once the difference between the true and the false; make us able to test everything, and to hold fast to that which is good; give us such a love of truth, that no false thing may ever be able to lure us from it.

So grant that all our lives we may know, and love, and live the truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

From *Prayers for the Christian Year*
by William Barclay

MARCH 13

O God, you are our refuge! When we are exhausted by life's effort; when we are bewildered by life's problems; when we are wounded by life's sorrows: We come for refuge to you. O God, you are our strength! When our tasks are beyond our powers; when our temptations are too strong for us; when duty calls for more than we have to give to it: We come for strength to you.

O God, it is from you that all goodness comes! It is from you that our ideals come; it is from you that there comes to us the spur of high desire and the restraint of conscience. It is from you that there has come the strength to resist temptation, and to do any good thing.

And now as we pray to you, help us to believe in your love, so that we may be certain that you will hear our prayer; help us to believe in your power, so that we may be certain that you are able to do for us above all that we ask or think; help us to believe in your wisdom, so that we may be certain that you will answer, not as our ignorance asks, but as your perfect wisdom knows best.

All this we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

From *Prayers for the Christian Year*
by William Barclay

MARCH 14

O God, Our Father, we know our own weakness.

Our minds are darkened, and by ourselves we cannot find and know the truth. Our wills are weak, and by ourselves we cannot resist temptation, or bring to its completion that which we resolve to do. Our hearts are fickle, and by ourselves we cannot give to you the loyalty which is your due. Our steps are faltering, and by ourselves we cannot walk in your straight way.

So this day we ask you, to enlighten us, to strengthen us; to guide us, that we may know you, and love you, and follow you all the days of our life.

Give to your Church your blessing and your protection, guide her in her thinking, that she may be saved from the heresies which destroy the faith. Strengthen her in her witness, that she may bring no discredit on the name she bears. Inspire her in her fellowship, that those who enter her may find within her your fellowship and the fellowship of their fellow men.

From Prayers for the Christian Year
by William Barclay

MARCH 15

I have come to learn certain things about private prayer. You cannot pray to order. You can get on your knees to order; but how to pray? I have found nothing more important than to learn how to get oneself into that frame and condition in which one can pray. You have to learn how to start yourself off, and it is just here that this knowledge of yourself is so important. What I have generally found is that to read something which can be characterized in general as devotional is of great value. By devotional I do not mean something sentimental. I mean something with a true element of worship in it. Notice that I do not say that you should start yourself in prayer by always reading the Scriptures; because you can have precisely the same difficulty there. Start by reading something that will warm your spirit. Get rid of a coldness that may have developed in your spirit, to warm yourself up, to give yourself a start. It is comparable, if you like, to starting a car when it is cold. You have to learn how to use a spiritual choke. I have found it most rewarding to do that, and not to struggle vainly. When one finds oneself in this condition, and that it is difficult to pray, do not struggle in prayer for the time being, but read something that will warm and stimulate you, and you will find that it will put you into a condition in which you will be able to pray more freely.

From *Preaching and Preachers*
by D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

MARCH 16

My prayer is not the whimpering of a beggar nor a confession of love. Nor is it the trivial reckoning of a small tradesman: Give me and I shall give you.

My prayer is the report of a soldier to his general: This is what I did today, this is how I fought to save the entire battle in my own sector, these are the obstacles I found, this is how I plan to fight tomorrow.

My God and I are horsemen galloping in the burning sun or under drizzling rain. Pale, starving, but unsubdued, we ride and converse.

“Leader!” I cry. He turns his face towards me, and I shudder to confront his anguish.

Our love for each other is rough and ready, we sit at the same table, we drink the same wine in this low tavern of life.

From *The Saviors of God*
by Nikos Kazantzakis

MARCH 17

Listen, O Lord, to my prayers. Listen to my desire to be with you, to dwell in your house, and to let my whole being be filled with your presence. But none of this is possible without you. When you are not the one who fills me, I am soon filled with endless thoughts and concerns that divide me and tear me away from you. Even thoughts about you, good spiritual thoughts, can be little more than distractions when you are not their author.

O Lord, thinking about you, being fascinated with theological ideas and discussions, being excited about histories of Christian spirituality and stimulated by thoughts and ideas about prayer and meditation, all of this can be as much an expression of greed as the unruly desire for food, possessions, or power.

Every day I see that only you can teach me to pray, only you can set my heart at rest, only you can let me dwell in your presence. No book, no ideas, no concept or theory will ever bring me close to you unless you yourself are the one who lets these instruments become the way to you.

But Lord, let me at least remain open to your initiative; let me wait patiently and attentively for that hour when you will break through all the walls I have erected. Teach me, O Lord, to pray.

From A Cry for Mercy
by Henri J.M. Nouwen

MARCH 18

Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. – Revelation 3:20

To pray is to let Jesus come into our hearts. This teaches us, in the first place, that it is not our prayer which moves the Lord Jesus. It is Jesus who moves us to pray. He knocks. Thereby he makes known his desire to come in to us. Our prayers are always a result of Jesus knocking at our heart's doors.

From time immemorial prayer has been spoken of as the breath of the soul. And the figure is an excellent one indeed.

The air which our body requires envelops us on every hand. The air of itself seeks to enter our bodies and, for this reason, exerts pressure upon us. It is well known that it is more difficult to hold one's breath than it is to breathe. We need but exercise our organs of respiration, and air will enter forthwith into our lungs and perform its life-giving function to the entire body.

The air which our soul needs also envelops all of us at all times and on all sides. God is round about us in Christ on every hand, with his many-sided and all-sufficient grace. All we need to do is to open our hearts. Prayer is the breath of the soul, the organ by which we receive Christ into our parched and withered hearts.

From *Prayer*
by O. Hallesby

MARCH 19

As Pants the Hart for Cooling Streams

As pants the hart for cooling streams,
When heated in the chase,
So longs my soul, O God for thee
And thy refreshing grace.

For thee, my God, the living God,
My thirsty soul doth pine;
O when shall I behold thy face,
Thou Majesty divine!

I sigh to think of happier days,
When thou, O Lord, wast nigh;
When every heart was turned to praise,
And none more blest than I.

Why restless, why cast down, my soul?
Hope still, and thou shall sing
The praise of him who is thy God,
Thy Savior, and thy King. Amen.

Nahum Tate and Nicholas Brady

MARCH 20

O God, our Father, we know that the issues of life and death are in your hands, and we know that you are loving us with an everlasting love. If it is your will, grant to us to live in happiness and in peace.

In all our undertakings, grant us prosperity and good success. In all our friendships, grant us to find our friends faithful and true. In all bodily things, make us fit and healthy. Able for the work of the day.

In all things of the mind, make us calm and serene, free from anxiety and worry. In material things, save us from poverty and from want. In spiritual things, save us from doubt and from distrust. Grant us, in our work, satisfaction; in our study true wisdom; in our pleasure gladness, in our love loyalty.

And if misfortune does come to us, grant that any trial may only bring us closer to one another and closer to you; and grant that nothing may shake our certainty that you work all things together for good, and that a Father's hand will never cause his child a needless tear. Hear this our prayer; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

From *Prayers for the Christian Year*
by William Barclay

MARCH 21

In the evening, I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate-Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Jesus Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation. And an assurance was given me, that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.

John Wesley

MARCH 22

Thy will be done. I yield up everything.

The life is more than meat – then more than health;

The body more than raiment – then more than wealth;

The hairs I made not, thou art numbering.

Thou art my life – I the brook, thou the spring.

Because thine eyes are open, I can see;

Because thou art thyself, 'tis therefore I am me.

From *Diary of an Old Soul*

by George MacDonald

Care thou for mine whom I must leave behind;

Care that they know who 'tis for them takes care;

Thy present patience help them still to bear;

Lord, keep them clearing, growing, heart and mind;

In one thy oneness us together bind;

Last earthly prayer with which to thee I cling-

Grant that, save love, we owe not anything.

From *Diary of an Old Soul*

by George MacDonald.

MARCH 23

O God, our Father, in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus you have given us the remedy for sin. In him you have opened to us the way to forgiveness for all our past sins, and you have given us the strength and the power to live in purity and in truth.

Help us to put away all evil things. Silence the evil word; forbid the evil deed; break the evil habit; banish the evil thought. Take away the evil desire and the evil ambition; and make our lives to shine like lights in this dark world.

Help us to live in purity. Make all our words so pure that you may hear them; make all our deeds so pure that you may see them; make all our thoughts and desires so pure that they may bear your scrutiny. And so grant that we being pure in heart may see you.

Help us to live in truth. Grant that we may never speak or act a lie; that we may never be misled by false or mistaken beliefs; that we may never evade the truth, even when we do not want to see it.

Grant to us at all times to seek and to find; to know and to love; to obey and to live the truth.

This we ask for the sake of him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, even for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

From Prayers for the Christian Year
by William Barclay

MARCH 24

Three men shared death upon a hill,

but only one man dies.

the other two –

a thief and God himself –

made rendezvous.

The crosses still

are borne up Calvary's Hill,

where Sin still lifts them high:

upon the one, sag broken men,

who, cursing, die;

another holds the praying thief,

or those who penitent as he,

still find the Christ

beside them on the tree.

"Upon A Hill"

by Miriam LeFevre Crouse

MARCH 25

Love to pray. Feel often during the day the need for prayer, and take trouble to pray. Prayer enlarges the heart until it is capable of containing God's gift of himself. Ask and seek, and your heart will grow big enough to receive him and keep him as your own.

From A Gift for God
by Mother Teresa

It is impressive to see how prayer opens one's eyes to nature. Prayer makes men contemplative and attentive. In place of manipulating, the man who prays stands receptive before the world. He no longer grabs but caresses, he no longer bites, but kisses, he no longer examines but admires. To this man, as for Merton, nature can show itself completely renewed. Instead of an obstacle, it becomes a way, instead of an invulnerable shield, it becomes a veil which gives a preview of unknown horizons.

From Thomas Merton: Contemplative Critic
by Henri J.M. Nouwen

MARCH 26

Q Lord,

You know me.

You know when I sit
and when I stand.

You have me always present
In your mind.

For this, Lord, I thank you.

You know the path for my life
and what is best for me.

Lord, reveal to me the path
I am to walk.

Bless me and guide me
and be Lord to me

so that whichever road I take
I may do all for your glory.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

"Vocation Prayer"

from the Beech Grove Benedictine Community

MARCH 27

Let us not be satisfied with just giving money. Money is not enough, money can be got, but they need your hearts to love them. So, spread love everywhere you go: first of all in your own home. Give love to your children, to your wife or husband, to a next-door neighbor.

From *A Gift for God*
by Mother Teresa

Some people came to Calcutta, and before leaving, they begged me: "Tell us something that will help us to live our lives better." And I said, "Smile at each other; smile at your wife, smile at your husband, smile at your children, smile at each other – it doesn't matter who it is – and that will help you to grow up in greater love for each other." And then one of them asked me: "Are you married?" and I said: "Yes, and I find it difficult sometimes to smile at Jesus." And it is true, Jesus can be very demanding also, and it is at those times when he is so demanding that to give him a big smile is very beautiful.

From *A Gift for God*
by Mother Teresa

MARCH 28

Ah, Lord God, thou holy Lover of my soul, when thou comest into my soul, all that is within me shall rejoice. Thou art my Glory and Refuge in the day of trouble. Set me free from all evil passions, and heal my heart of all inordinate affections; that, being inwardly cured and thoroughly cleansed, I may be made fit to love, courageous to suffer, steady to persevere. Nothing is sweeter than Love, nothing more courageous, nothing fuller nor better in heaven and earth; because Love is born of God, and cannot rest but in God, above all created things. Let me love thee more than myself, nor love myself but for thee. Amen.

Thomas á Kempis

MARCH 29

It is possible either to sustain and strengthen this burning of the spirit, or to quench it. It is warmed above all by acts of love towards God and our neighbor – this, indeed, is the essence of the spiritual life – by a general fidelity to all God’s commandments, with a quiet conscience, by deeds that are pitiless to our own soul and body, and by prayers and thoughts of God. The spirit is quenched by distraction of the attention from God and God’s works, by excessive anxiety about worldly matters, by indulgence in sensual pleasure, by pandering to carnal desires, and by infatuation with material things. If this spirit is quenched, then the Christian life will be quenched too.

From *The Art of Prayer*

MARCH 30

Lord, make me an
instrument of your peace!
Where there is hatred,
let me sow love.
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,
grant that I may not
so much seek to be consoled
as to console;
to be understood
as to understand;
to be loved
as to love;
for it is in giving
that we receive;
it is in pardoning
that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying
that we are born to Eternal Life.

St. Francis of Assisi

MARCH 31

Our progress in holiness depends on God and ourselves – on God's grace and on our will to be holy. We must have a real living determination to reach holiness.

From *A Gift for God*
by Mother Teresa

You write that at times, during prayer, a solution to some problem that perplexes you in your spiritual life comes of itself from an unknown source. This is good. It is the true Christian way of being taught God's truth. Here the promise is fulfilled, 'And they shall be taught of God' (John 6:45). So indeed, it is. Truths are inscribed in the heart by the finger of God, and remain there firm and indelible. Do not neglect these truths which God inscribes, but write them down.

From *The Art of Prayer*

APRIL 1

Accompany me today, O Spirit, in all my goings, but stay with me also when I am in my own home and among my kindred. Forbid that I should fail to show to those nearest to me the sympathy and consideration which thy grace enables me to show to others with whom I have to do. Forbid that I should refuse to my own household the courtesy and politeness which I think proper to show to strangers. Let charity today begin at home.

Leave me not, O gracious Presence, in such hours as I may today devote to the reading of books or of newspapers. Guide my mind to choose the right books and, having chosen them, to read them in the right way. When I read for profit, grant that all I read may lead me nearer to thyself. When I read for recreation, grant that what I read may not lead me away from thee. Let all my reading so refresh my mind that I may the more eagerly seek after whatsoever things are pure and fair and true.

Let me have a special sense of thy nearness to me, O God, in such times as I may be able to devote to prayer, to any public exercise of worship, or to the receiving of the Blessed Sacrament; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen

From A Diary of Private Prayer
by John Baillie

APRIL 2

○ Lord, thou knowest what is the better way, let this or that be done as thou shalt please. Give what thou wilt, and how much thou wilt, and when thou wilt. Deal with me as thou knowest, and best pleaseth thee, and is most for thy honor. Set me where thou wilt, and deal with me in all things as thou wilt. I am in thy hands; turn me round and turn me back again, even as a wheel. Behold I am thy servant, prepared for all things; for I desire not to live unto myself, but unto thee; and Oh that I could do it worthily and perfectly!

From *I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes*
by Glenn Clark

APRIL 3

When you undertake some special endeavor, do not concentrate your attention and heart on it, but look upon it as something secondary; and by entire surrender to God open yourself up to God's grace, like a vessel laid out ready to receive it. Whoever finds grace finds it by means of faith and zeal, says St. Gregory of Sinai, and not by zeal alone. However painstaking our work, so long as we omit to surrender ourselves to God while performing it, we fail to attract God's grace, and our efforts build up within us not so much a true spirit of grace but the spirit of a Pharisee. Grace is the soul of the struggle. Our efforts will be rightly directed so long as we preserve self-abasement, contrition, fear of God, devotion to him, and understand our dependence on divine help. If we are self-satisfied and content with our efforts, it is a sign that they are not performed in the right way, or that we lack wisdom.

From The Art of Prayer

APRIL 4

I call to you, O Lord, from my quiet darkness. Show me your mercy and love. Let me see your face, hear your voice, touch the hem of your cloak. I want to love you, be with you, speak to you and simply stand in your presence. But I cannot make it happen. Pressing my eyes against my hands is not praying, and reading about your presence is not living in it.

But there is that moment in which you will come to me, as you did to your fearful disciples, and say, "Do not be afraid; it is I." Let that moment come soon, O Lord. And if you want to delay it, then make me patient. Amen.

From A Cry for Mercy
by Henri J.M. Nouwen

APRIL 5

Grant O God,

That we may never lose the way through our self-will, and so end up in the far countries of the soul. That we may never abandon the struggle, but that we may endure to the end, and so be saved.

That we may never drop out of the race, but that we may ever press forward to the goal of our high calling.

That we may never choose the cheap and passing things, and let go the precious things that last forever.

That we may never take the easy way, and so leave the right way.

That we may never forget that sweat is the price of all things, and that without the cross, there cannot be the crown.

So keep us and strengthen us by your grace that no disobedience and no weakness and no failure may stop us from entering into the blessedness which awaits those who are faithful in all the changes and the chances of life down even to the gates of death; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

From *Prayers for the Christian Year*
by William Barclay

APRIL 6

My Lord Jesus, I beseech you, do not be far from me, but come quickly and help me, for vain thoughts have risen in my heart and worldly fears have troubled me sorely. How shall I break them down? How shall I go unhurt without your help?

I shall go before you, says our Lord; I shall drive away the pride of your heart; then shall I set open to you the gates of spiritual knowledge and show you the privacy of my secrets.

O Lord, do as you say, and then all wicked imaginings shall flee away from me. Truly, this is my hope and my only comfort – to fly to you in every trouble, to trust steadfastly in you, to call inwardly upon you, and to abide patiently your coming and your heavenly consolations which, I trust, will quickly come to me.

From *The Imitation of Christ*
by Thomas á Kempis

APRIL 7

O Lord, in whose hands are life and death, by whose power I am sustained, and by whose mercy I am spared, look down upon me with pity. Forgive me, that I have this day neglected the duty which Thou hast assigned to it, and suffered the hours, of which I must give account, to pass away without any endeavor to accomplish Thy will, or to promote my own salvation. Make me to remember, O God, that every day is Thy gift, and ought to be used according to Thy command. Grant me, therefore, so to repent of my negligence, that I may obtain mercy from Thee, and pass the time which Thou shalt yet allow me, in diligent performance of Thy commands, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

From *Doctor Johnson's Prayers*
edited by Elton Trueblood

APRIL 8

Almighty God, in whose hands are all the powers

of man; who givest understanding, and takest it away; who, as it seemeth good unto Thee, enlightenest the thoughts of the simple, and darkenest the meditations of the wise, be present with me in my studies and enquiries.

Grant, O Lord, that I may not lavish away the life which Thou hast given me on useless trifles, nor waste it in vain searches after things which Thou hast hidden from me.

Enable me, by thy Holy Spirit, so to shun sloth and negligence, that every day may discharge part of the task which Thou hast allotted me, and so further with thy help that labor which, without thy help, must be ineffectual, that I may obtain, in all my undertakings, such success as will most promote thy glory, and the salvation of my own soul, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

From *Doctor Johnson's Prayers*
edited by Elton Trueblood

APRIL 9

Maundy Thursday

Lord, I have fallen again – a human clod! Selfish I was, and heedless to offend; stood on my rights. Thy own child would not send away his shreds of nothing for the whole God! Wretched, to thee who savest, low I bend. Give me the power to let my rag-rights go in the great wind that from thy gulf doth blow.

From *Diary of an Old Soul*
by George MacDonald

Keep me from wrath, let it seem ever so right: My wrath will never work thy righteousness. Up, up the hill, to the whiter than snow-shine, help me to climb, and dwell in pardon's light. I must be pure as thou, or even less than thy design of me – therefore incline my heart to take man's wrongs as thou tak'st mine.

From *Diary of an Old Soul*
by George MacDonald

APRIL 10, 2020

Good Friday

O dear Lord, what can I say to you?

Is there any word that could come from my mouth?

Any thought? Any sentence?

You died for me, you gave all for my sins,

you not only became man for me

but also suffered the most cruel death for me.

Is there any response?

I wish that I could find a fitting response,

But can only confess humbly to you

That the immensity of your divine love

makes any response seem totally inadequate.

Let me just stand and look at you.

Your body is broken, your head wounded,

your hands and feet are split open by nails,

your side pierced.

It is all over now. It is finished.

It is fulfilled. It is accomplished.

Sweet Lord, gracious Lord,

generous Lord, forgiving Lord,

I adore you, I praise you, I thank you.

You have made all things new

through your passion and death.

Your cross has been planted in this world

as the new sign of hope.

Let me always live under your cross, O Lord,

And proclaim the hope of your cross unceasingly.

Amen.

Henri J.M. Nouwen

APRIL 11

Without solitude it is virtually impossible to live a spiritual life. Solitude begins with a time and place for God, and him alone. If we really believe not only that God exists, but also that he is actively present in our lives – healing, teaching, and guiding – we need to set aside a time and space to give him our undivided attention. Jesus says, ‘Go to your private room and, when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in that secret place” (Matthew 6:6).

From *Making All Things New*
by Henri J.M. Nouwen

APRIL 12

Easter Day

O God, our Father, at Easter time we remember the great hope of eternal life which you have set before us, and we feel within our hearts the longings for goodness and for you. Grant that nothing may hinder the hope of eternal life from coming true, and the desire for goodness and for you from being realized.

From *Prayers for the Christian Year*
by William Barclay

The Day of Resurrection has dawned upon us, the day of true light and life, within Christ, the life of believers, arose from the dead. Let us give abundant thanks and praise to God, that while we solemnly celebrate the day of our Lord's resurrection, he may be pleased to bestow on us quiet peace and special gladness; so that being protected from morning to night by his favoring mercy, we may rejoice in the gift of our Redeemer. Amen.

Mozarabic Sacramentary