

COME
— *to the* —
LIGHT

Daily Prayers for Lent



SARAH THOMAS TRACY

Introduction

Not too long ago, on Christmas Day, we celebrated the birth of Jesus—the Light to the nations. Today, the prayers in this booklet invite us to “come to the Light.” Such an invitation presupposes that we may not be there yet. While the Light of Christ lives on in our world, we can become distracted and, at times, even overcome by darkness. These weeks of Lent provide us with the opportunity to recognize the darkness within and around us, and to illuminate that darkness with God’s saving light.

ASH WEDNESDAY

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! **2 CORINTHIANS 6:2**

Lord, now is the time; today is the day. You present me with a new beginning. May I come to you daily during these weeks of Lent, praying that you change my heart. Erase the darkness within me so that your Light may shine forth. Amen.

What does it profit them if they gain the whole world, but lose or forfeit themselves?

LUKE 9:25

God, our source of all riches, the newspaper headlines provide us with plenty of evidence of those willing to forfeit themselves for financial gain: college admissions scandals, Ponzi schemes, identity theft, to name a few. I ask myself: What about me? When am I distracted and allured by the riches of this world for my own gain at the expense of another? While my acts of selfishness may not be criminal, they are harmful. May my eyes and heart always focus on you and the richness of your love. Amen.

*Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice...*

ISAIAH 58:6A

Father of Justice, your request feels overwhelming. How can my fasting loose the bonds of injustice? Can't I just give up chocolate? Injustices abound in our world: poverty, discrimination and hunger live in every city. It doesn't seem possible that I can have any effect on such a situation. Perhaps I need to look closer: Where are the injustices in my neighborhood, my parish, my workplace, my family? Who are the oppressed in my life? As I embark on my Lenten practices, may I strive to fast from those words, thoughts and actions that further the injustices within my world. Amen.

Jesus answered, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance." **LUKE 5:31-32**

Lord, God of Mercy, are there enough tables to seat all of us sinners whom you call to repentance? Is anyone truly righteous? We are all in need of your healing. I am in need of your healing. But I worry that, most days, my eyes are blind to who I am. It is more comfortable to focus on my virtues than to examine my sins and my need to repent. Yet, if I deny my sinfulness, then what need do I have for your salvation? May I humbly echo the words of the tax collector in the temple: "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." Amen.

FIRST SUNDAY of LENT

I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. **GENESIS 9:13-15A**

Ever-present God, we humans are more in need of a reminder of our covenant with you than you are. Your loving kindness is steadfast, while at times our commitment can be weak or abandoned. I admit that I need frequent reminders of your loving presence. Especially on those days that are darkened by the clouds of fear, loneliness, confusion and sadness, I seek the reassurance of your bow. And on such days when I bask in the assurance of our covenant, may I be a sign of your love to others. Amen.

MONDAY, FIRST WEEK of LENT

Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven." **MATTHEW 16:16-17**

Jesus, the Anointed One, how have I come to believe that you are the Messiah? Parents, grandparents, pastors and many others taught me religious doctrines. I know so many people—family and friends—who received the same religious instruction, yet they do not believe. Faith cannot be taught; faith is a matter of the heart. Like Simon Peter, indeed I am blessed, for I have been given the gift of faith. May I never take this mysterious gift for granted. I pray that as I share my religious beliefs with students and grandchildren that you bless them with the gift of faith so that they may come to believe and know that you are the Messiah. Amen.

EASTER SUNDAY

Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed. JOHN 20:8

Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! Oh, to be the other disciple, the one who outran Simon Peter to the tomb. Yet when he arrived, he stood at its entrance, waiting for Peter to go in first. Jesus, I wonder why he waited—was he afraid of what he may encounter? Did he do so out of respect to Simon Peter? The other disciple's body may have paused, yet his heart did not—"he saw and believed." Without hesitation, may I always proclaim with joy: Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia! Amen.

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By Sarah Thomas Tracy. Design by Jeff McCall. Cover image: Shutterstock.
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