

MEETING AND PRAYER GUIDE

MARCH 15, 2023

The Fourth Wednesday of Lent



OPENING PRAYER

COME, HOLY SPIRIT, AND RENEW THE FACE OF THE EARTH!

IN THIS SEASON OF LENT WE ASK FOR THE GRACE TO BE OPEN TO TRANSFORMATION: TO LOOK HARD AT WHAT IS LACKING IN OUR LIVES AND TO LET THE LAST WORDS OF JESUS ON THE CROSS FILL OUR EMPTINESS WITH NEW PURPOSE.

REMOVE OUR HEARTS OF STONE AND GIVE US HEARTS OF FLESH TO FOLLOW THE LORD AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS WITH JOY.

THIS WE ASK THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, OUR LORD AND SAVIOR, WHO LIVES AND REIGNS WITH YOU AND THE FATHER, NOW AND FOR EVER. AMEN.

SCRIPTURE

My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

Why so far from my call for help, from my cries of anguish?

My God, I call by day, but you do not answer; by night, but I have no relief.

Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the glory of Israel.

In you our fathers trusted; they trusted and you rescued them. . . .

In you they trusted and were not disappointed.

But I am a worm, not a man, scorned by men, despised by the people.

All who see me mock me; they curl their lips and jeer; they shake their heads at me:

'He relied on the Lord—let him deliver him; if he loves him, let him rescue him.'

. . .
 I will live for the Lord; my descendants will serve you.
 The generation to come will be told of the Lord, and they will proclaim
 to a people yet unborn the deliverance you have brought.”
 Ps. 22: 2; 7-9; 31-32.

LINK TO THE VIDEO REFLECTION

<https://youtu.be/hSp35Jth1oA>

At the bottom of the YouTube video screen, click “CC” to stop closed captioning.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. As you meditate on the words of Psalm 22 above that Jesus prayed on the cross, consider the darkness that Jesus experienced. Can you feel it? Can you *understand* it?
2. When you experience darkness, does it feel like you are the only one who has ever suffered in this way? How does *thinking* about Jesus and his sacrifice allow us to escape victimhood?
3. Am I aware that my sins became the darkness that Jesus experienced in his Passion? How do I respond to this personal response of Jesus to me, a sinner?
4. Are your hope and trust in the Lord built on the rock of a reasoning response to God’s self-revelation -- or on the shifting sands of feelings?

CLOSING PRAYER

LORD JESUS,

BLESS EACH OF US GATHERED HERE, AND THE MEMBERS OF OUR FAMILIES, SO THAT WE MAY GROW IN VIRTUE AS YOUR DISCIPLES DURING THESE 40 DAYS OF LENT AND COME TO KNOW YOU BETTER AND LOVE YOU MORE.

FOR WHAT ELSE SHALL WE PRAY? **[SPONTANEOUS PRAYERS ARE WELCOME.]**

FOR THESE SPOKEN PRAYERS AND THE UNSPOKEN INTENTIONS IN OUR HEARTS, WE ASK THAT THEY BE GRANTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH GOD’S WILL, THROUGH CHRIST OUR LORD. AMEN.