



ST. MARY'S
ON THE HIGHLANDS

LENTEN
DEVOTIONS
2026

Thoughts and prayers from the
St. Mary's Faith Family



AN INVITATION TO A HOLY LENT

Lent is a deep and wonderful tradition of the church, but it is also a very personal journey that can take on a different shape each year. Before the church observed Lent, the scriptures gave us accounts of the wilderness. Noah, Moses, Elijah, and finally Jesus all experienced 40 challenging days. These are different stories, united by a common theme – that 40 days of difficulty and fasting ultimately lead to new life.

We are given these 40 days to prepare us for the season of Easter. It is an invitation into our own wilderness so that we can more deeply appreciate the Passion of Christ and the extent to which we depend on what is accomplished for us in the Resurrection. But even now, I am getting ahead of myself - which, in itself, is a very tempting move to make during Lent. Mentioning the Resurrection in an invitation to Lent is like I almost typed out Allelu...

This season is one of quiet reflection and repentance. We abstain from “the A word” in our worship, so that it feels all the more glorious to exclaim it when the time comes. It is tempting to jump ahead to the empty tomb, but there must be death for there to be resurrection.

But the wilderness can also be a beautiful place. Great revelations and self-discovery often surprise us when we are lost and wandering in our lives.



ST. MARY'S ON THE HIGHLANDS



This booklet contains weekly reflections based on the Collect and Gospel from the previous Sunday and a Lenten hymn text. Vestry members and choir members have offered their time with these texts and opened their hearts to give us all something to consider. I hope these meditations will offer guidance through the Gospel readings and hymn lyrics and carry you through each week of your own wilderness journey.

I'll leave you with Jesus' three responses to the devil as he is tempted in Matthew 4:

"It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'

"

"Again, it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' "

"Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.' "

A blessed and holy Lent to you all,
Richard+



ST. MARY'S
ON THE HIGHLANDS

The First Sunday in Lent



Lent I, February 22

Collect

Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan: Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations; and, as you know the weaknesses of each of us, let each one find you mighty to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Matthew 4:1-11

Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written,

'One does not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'

Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written,

'He will command his angels concerning you,'
and 'On their hands they will bear you up,
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'

Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor; and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written,

'Worship the Lord your God,
and serve only him.'

Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

Lent I, February 22

“SERVE ONLY HIM.”

By Bert Amason



“Worship the Lord your God and serve only Him.” We should all take this time of Lent to recognize that we are assaulted by many temptations- hourly, daily, and weekly. We are assaulted so frequently that we often do not even recognize many of these things as “temptations.” I know that we as Christians need to reflect on these temptations in our lives, especially during Lent. Like Jesus in the wilderness, we are in the wilderness of the secular modern world. We are often spiritually “fasted” by the secular world and its temptations. We also need to acknowledge that we are weak against these temptations, especially in light of the numerous ones we face in our modern lives. Let’s take this time of Lent to quiet our minds, block out the temptations we face, grow closer to Jesus, and ask Him to save us from our sins. Let’s take this time of Lent to draw closer to God. Let’s take this time of Lent to be at peace with ourselves and those around us. Let’s take this time of Lent to remind ourselves that we should live on “every word that comes from the mouth of God.” Let’s take this time of Lent to remember not to test God with our actions. Let’s take this time of Lent to worship the Lord, our God, and serve Him only.

With the noise of the world quieted, listen for the voice of God. He is with us always. We just need to listen. Amen.

Lent I, February 22

Hymn 140 “Wilt thou forgive that sin”

Wilt thou forgive that sin, where I begun,
which is my sin, though it were done before?
Wilt thou forgive those sins through which I run,
and do run still, though still I do deplore?
When thou hast done, thou hast not done,
for I have more.

Wilt thou forgive that sin, by which I won
others to sin, and made my sin their door?
Wilt thou forgive that sin which I did shun
a year or two, but wallowed in a score?
When thou hast done, thou hast not done,
for I have more.

I have a sin of fear that when I've spun
my last thread, I shall perish on the shore;
swear by thyself, that at my death thy Son
shall shine as he shines now, and heretofore.
And having done that, thou hast done,
I fear no more.

Hymn 140
“Wilt thou forgive that sin, where I begun”
Words: John Donne (1573-1631)
Tune: *Donne*, melody John Hilton (1599-1637)



Click the image to listen.

Lent I, February 22

DONE, NOT DONE

By Andrew Morgan



During Lent, I sometimes feel as though I am being asked to focus on myself a bit too much. Especially those parts that I don't especially like. I think about what I am giving up. I think about what I should have given up but didn't. The services seem to be filled with "I" and "me", "our" and "we." We are but dust. My sin is always before me. Self-examination, self-denial, acknowledging our wretchedness...

Donne's text reminds me that to meditate on sin rightly is to be overwhelmed by grace. The further he descends - his own sins repeated, the sins of others inspired - still further does God's love abound. His feelings of sadness, joy, faith, and disbelief are echoed in Hilton's haunting setting. When you or I ask questions in ordinary speech, our voices naturally go up in pitch. Donne's poem is filled with questions, and yet each line of Hilton's melody ends with a descending tone.

The season of Lent invites us to explore contradictions better felt than understood. Sin impossible to comprehend, forgiven. Fear impossible to overcome, relieved. Doubt impossible to answer, quieted. Donne's repetition of "done...not done" makes this tension explicit. The mystery of grace is that by the time I realize how far I am from God, I am already closer than I could have imagined. It is this very closeness that enables us to see the distance, the distance that enables us to see the closeness.

Donne grapples with this mystery in the final stanza, when he admits his greatest fear is that in the end he will be lost. But by this very admission ("having done that") he discovers he has already been found ("[T]hou hast [Donne]"). Once again, he will fear no more.



ST. MARY'S
ON THE HIGHLANDS

The Second Sunday in Lent



Lent II, March 1

Collect

O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy: Be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word, Jesus Christ your Son; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen

John 3:1-17

There was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?"

"Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

"Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."

Lent II, March 1

FOR THE REVOLUTION!

By Stuart Beale



In preparation to write this Lenten reflection, I had a conversation with my wife; we circled the passage several times, trying to think of a new or different perspective, something revolutionary. And there it was. My daughters discovered and fell in love with the musical *Hamilton* almost a year apart. In other words, the soundtrack has been on repeat in my home and car for around two years, but who's counting?

I can no longer hear the word “revolution” without hearing, “You want a Revolution, I want a revelation.” (The Schuyler Sisters, *Hamilton: An American Musical*, Lin-Manuel Miranda) in my head.

Revolution: a forcible overthrow of a government or social order, in favor of a new system. (dictionary.com)

Revelation: a surprising and previously unknown fact, especially one that is made known in a dramatic way. (dictionary.com)

Nicodemus was a religious elite. He was educated, disciplined, and committed. He followed the rules. He knew the law. He was doing everything “right”. He went to Jesus at night with questions. Jesus tells him something shocking; no matter how many rules he follows, no matter how carefully he keeps the law, unless he is born again of the Spirit, he will not enter the kingdom of God. Jesus presses further: “Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?”

In that moment, Nicodemus experiences a revelation.

With his words, Jesus overturns the old understanding of earning God's approval. The kingdom of God cannot be earned; it is freely given by the grace of God. It is entered by surrender, by belief, by being born of the Spirit. Jesus lays it out as simply as possible, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

It is a revolution of grace. The old system says, “Do more. Be better.” Jesus says, “Receive, believe, be made new.”

Lent reminds us how easily we slip back into striving, but the revelation remains: we are not saved by what we do for God, but by what God has done for us.

And that changes everything. For the Revolution!

Lent II, March 1

Hymn 150 “Forty Days and Forty Nights”

Forty days and forty nights thou wast fasting in the wild;
forty days and forty nights tempted, and yet undefiled.

Should not we thy sorrow share and from worldly joys abstain,
fasting with unceasing prayer, strong with thee to suffer pain?

Then if Satan on us press, Jesus, Savior, hear our call!
Victor in the wilderness, grant we may not faint or fall!

So shall we have peace divine: holier gladness ours shall be;
round us, too, shall angels shine, such as ministered to thee.

Keep, O keep us, Savior dear, ever constant by thy side;
that with thee we may appear at the eternal Eastertide.

Hymn 150
“Forty Days and Forty Nights”
Words: George Hunt Smyttan (1822-1870)
Tune: Aus Der Tiefe Rufe Ich, composer
Martin Herbst (1654-1681)
Click the image to listen.



Lent II, March 1

OUR VICTOR IN THE WILDERNESS

By Anna Dodd



“Forty Days and Forty Nights” has long been a hymn that shapes Lenten worship. Its simple melody and steady rhythm portray a long, faithful walk; step after step, into the wilderness right alongside Jesus.

The hymn draws us into the Gospel accounts of Jesus’ forty days in the desert, when he fasted and was tempted by the devil. Matthew and Luke describe three stark and very human trials: the need for food, the desire for certainty and protection, and the lure of power. Mark, in just a few words, reminds us how raw that time truly was. Jesus was alone, among wild animals, and strengthened by angels. This hymn does not soften His experience. Instead, it invites us to live it ourselves.

The text gives weight and significance to Jesus’ vulnerability. We sing that he was “tempted, and yet undefiled.” Jesus did not float above human struggle. He entered it fully. The hunger, the weariness, the pressure - these are not symbolic obstacles. They are the real conditions of a human life. But because he resisted in the very places where we so often fail - our physical desires, our longing for safety, our craving for control - his obedience to the Father ultimately led to the fulfillment of the Scriptures.

Without the truth of Jesus’ nature - both fully God and fully human - His sacrifice on the cross would be rendered moot. Israel wandered for forty years and struggled to trust God, ultimately failing to stay faithful. Where Israel failed, Jesus remains victorious. He answered every earthly and spiritual temptation with Scripture. He chose to rely on God, refused to test God, and worshiped God alone.

When I sing this hymn, I remember not only Christ’s strength, but also His closeness and fervent desire to remain with me. In that closeness, I put my hope in the Savior, fully God and fully Man, who met temptation in the dust and silence of the wilderness and who still walks with me through the deserts of my life. My prayer for St. Mary’s is that as you face the obstacles that Satan sets in your path, you would have faith to call upon Jesus; that He would send the Holy Spirit and his angels to minister to you in weakness, and that ultimately His name be praised through our obedience and faithfulness.



ST. MARY'S
ON THE HIGHLANDS

The Third Sunday in Lent



Lent III, March 8

Collect

Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

John 4:5-42

Jesus came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."

Lent III, March 8

John 4:5-42 (continued)

Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back." The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!" The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us." Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you."

Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you want?" or, "Why are you speaking with her?" Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?" They left the city and were on their way to him.

Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, "Rabbi, eat something." But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." So the disciples said to one another, "Surely no one has brought him something to eat?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest'? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting."

Lent III, March 8

John 4:5-42 (continued)

The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."

Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I have ever done." So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world."

Lent III, March 8

THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

By Brooks Adams



There is plenty of published commentary on this passage, so I'm going to focus specifically on what it says to me, and how I see it fitting into today's world. The three things that stick out to me are crossing boundaries, non-judgment, and living water.

Throughout his ministry, Jesus is constantly crossing boundaries, moving amongst and interacting with people he "shouldn't" be around, according to the society at the time. Jesus demonstrates that he has no interest in the conventions of the day and meets people where they are and how they are. In this, he never judges but always welcomes. I can't think of a more prescient time to be cognizant of this in today's era of hyper-everything - judgment, othering, and condemning. There is a group of guys I meet regularly, and a question came up recently about what we would like people to say about us. One of the things that I mentioned was that I want to be known as a nonjudgmental person. A couple of them who hail from a different faith tradition visibly exhaled in shock and asked me how I could not judge others for all the perceived wrongs in their book. I really had no words, except, how dare they?

In our society today, a lot of Christians talk about an afterlife, but not so much about life today. To me, the phrase "living water" suggests we don't have to wait for anything. It's here, now, and ample enough for us to live and share with everyone, whether they are in the right circles or not.

Lent III, March 8

Hymn 142

“Lord, who throughout these forty days”

Lord, who throughout these forty days for us didst fast and pray,
teach us with thee to mourn our sins, and close by thee to stay.

As thou with Satan didst contend and didst the victory win,
O give us strength in thee to fight, in thee to conquer sin.

As thou didst hunger bear and thirst, so teach us, gracious Lord,
to die to self, and chiefly live by thy most holy word.

And through these days of penitence, and through thy Passiontide,
yea, evermore, in life and death, Jesus! with us abide.

Abide with us, that so, this life of suffering overpast,
an Easter of unending joy we may attain at last!

Hymn 142

“Lord, who throughout these forty days”

Words: Claudia Frances Hernaman (1838-1898)

Tune: St. Flavian, melody form *Day's Psalter*,
1562; adapt. and harm. Richard Redhead
(1820-1901)

[Click the image to listen.](#)



Lent III, March 8

LORD, REMAIN WITH US

By Ingrid Richardson



Hymn 142 sings of the forty days and nights of prayer, fasting, and sacrifice to self in preparation for the death of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

This hymn represents the stark nakedness of the Lenten Season. More than the denial of a delicious steak or sumptuous ice cream, Hymn 142 lays out that we all must relinquish things of the flesh that lead us away our Savior and thus, our God.

From Satan's offerings of worldly riches beyond imagination in the wildness, to Peter's triple denial of Jesus, Judas's betrayal, Pontius Pilot's political expediency, a guilty verdict from a kangaroo court, a brutal flogging, that crown of thorns, the nails in the hands and feet, the taste of sour wine, and death by suffocation, the spear wound in His side after He draws His last breath, from horrendous death to glorious resurrection, we humbly ask our Lord and Savior to remain with us during sufferings as we pass from earthy life to the eternal joy of Easter.



ST. MARY'S
ON THE HIGHLANDS

The Fourth Sunday in Lent



Lent IV, March 15

Collect

Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

John 9:1-41

As Jesus walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the

Lent IV, March 15

John 9:1-41 (continued)

sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” He said, “He is a prophet.”

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” His parents answered, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, “Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.” He answered, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?” Then they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” The man answered, “Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out.

Lent IV, March 15

John 9:1-41 (continued)

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him." Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him. Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind." Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

Lent IV, March 15

HEALING SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS

By Elizabeth Wyatt



John 9:1-41 tells us the story of Jesus healing a man who was born blind. This is the first reported healing of someone blind from birth in recorded history at that time. Truly, God is the only one who could have healed this man. Yet the Pharisees could only see and find error in Jesus' healing this man on the Sabbath Day according to Jewish Law. This miracle is as wonderful to me as all of Jesus' other healings throughout scripture. As I pray and contemplate the Holy Spirit's guidance during this reflection, it is immediately clear what God is guiding me to see and absorb. Although I am not physically blind, I have been spiritually blind at many times in my life to acknowledge and accept spiritual opportunities that the Holy Spirit has put before me.

When I have allowed myself to absorb the light of Christ and to fully embrace the gift of serving others, it is then that I truly feel the presence of the Holy Spirit within me. I am sometimes challenged in my blindness and unable to or unwilling to see what God has placed in front of me. When I have followed his will, my soul glows with Christ's light. I pray during this Lenten season and beyond that I will reveal God's love and glory to others by not "being blind" to the spiritual opportunities God puts in my life.

Through Christ, the Lenten revelation and truly the message from Christ to me has allowed me to better focus and to actively seek ways that I can serve others. While serving others, it allows the light of Christ to shine brightly in my soul, in servitude, and in my everyday life. Glory to God!

Lent IV, March 15

Hymn 152

“Kind Maker of the world, O hear”

Kind maker of the world, O hear the fervent prayers with many a tear
Poured forth by all the penitent who keep this holy fast of Lent!

Each heart is manifest to thee; thou knowest our infirmity;
Now we repent, and seek thy face; grant unto us thy pard'ning grace.

Spare us, O Lord, who now confess our sins and all our wickedness,
And, for the glory of thy Name, our weaken'd souls to health reclaim.

Give us the self-control that springs from abstinence in outward things;
That from each stain and spot of sin, our souls may keep the fast within.

Grant, O thou blessèd Trinity; Grant, O unchanging Unity;
That this our fast of forty days may work our profit and thy praise! Amen.

Hymn 152

“Kind maker of the world, O hear”

Words: Att. Gregory the Great (540-604); ver.

Hymnal 1940, alt.

Tune: *A la venue de Noel*, melody from *Fleurs des noels*, 1535

Click the image to listen.



Lent IV, March 15

KIND MAKER OF THE WORLD

By Mike Allen



God is known by many names – Yahweh, Jehovah, Abba, Lord, Father, Creator, even the Great Physician- the list continues. Students of Hebrew Scripture often recognize dozens of distinct titles for God—some traditions count more than seventy. Yet of all these names, none feel more gentle, or more tender than this simple phrase, Kind Maker of this world.

This ancient prayer, attributed to St. Gregory the Great (540–604), was most likely prayed during Lenten evening vespers.

The opening verse is a humble petition to God from those earnestly seeking to uphold the discipline of the Lenten fast.

The second verse acknowledges a truth woven throughout Scripture: God knows our hearts completely. It echoes the spirit of David’s confession in Psalm 139. “O Lord, you have searched me and known me... you discern my thoughts from afar.” Nothing we attempt to conceal remains hidden from the One who fashioned us. Yet this verse also reminds us that the God who sees our weakness is the same God who offers pardon to all who humbly seek it.

Verse three turns our attention to God as the Great Physician—not tending to wounds of the body, but gently healing the deeper ailments of the soul.

In the penultimate verse, we are urged to tend to the inner condition of our hearts, knowing that when our inner life is rightly ordered, we are equipped to overcome the countless distractions that surround us in daily life.

Lent IV, March 15

Kind Maker of the world (continued)

In the final verse, I hear a prayer rising in harmony with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—a request that all I pour into this Lenten season would strengthen me throughout my life and be found pleasing in the sight of the Kind Maker of the world.

If you find yourself unsure of how to fast during Lent, you might simply begin by sitting with the words of hymn 152 each day. Let its prayerful verses guide your heart into the rhythm of the season.



ST. MARY'S
ON THE HIGHLANDS

The Fifth Sunday in Lent



Lent V, March 22

Collect

Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

John 11:1-45

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?" Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them." After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him." The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right." Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." Thomas, who was called

Lent V, March 22

John 11:1-45 (continued)

the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" But some of

Lent V, March 22

John 11:1-45 (continued)

said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

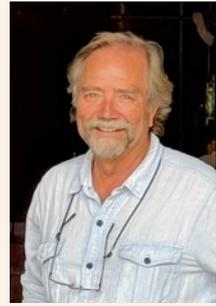
Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

Lent V, March 22

A MAN AND HIS FRIEND

By Kelly Seibels



My first thought was about a man and his friend, maybe his best friend. Hopefully we go through life blessed with a family of loved ones and a circle of close friends. And in that circle, there may be one, one who is your very best friend, who for a lifetime has shared your pain, and you his. When you hurt, he hurts, and when he calls in his darkest hour... you go.

Lazarus was Jesus's great friend, brother of Mary and Martha, and he lay dying in Bethany. The sisters sent word to Jesus who was 15 furlongs, about 2 miles away. The disciples warned him that if he went, he might get stoned. Jesus replied "if any man walks in the day, he stumbles not, because he sees the light of this world." And so they went.

Jesus knew his friend was already dead but saw this as an opportunity to show God's hand. He met Martha outside of town and told her that her brother would rise again. He then said "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

Mary came to where they were and was weeping. She fell down at Jesus's feet and said "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." And "Jesus wept." They all saw how much Jesus had loved his friend and wondered why this man, who could open the eyes of the blind, would let his friend die.

Lent V, March 22

A Man and His Friend (continued)

Jesus groaned as he came to the cave and told them to take away the stone. He told Martha that if she would only believe, she would see the glory of God, and they took away the stone. He then lifted up his eyes to the Lord and thanked him for hearing him, for the people that were standing by, may believe that the Lord had truly sent him.

Jesus cried with a loud voice , “Lazarus, come forth.” And he did.... And those that came believed.”

Only Jesus can raise the dead, but we can go to our friend and we can raise their spirits. My first thought was about a man and his friend.

Lent V, March 22

Hymn 145 “Now quit your care and anxious fear”

Now quit your care and anxious fear and worry; for schemes are vain
and fretting brings no gain.
Lent calls to prayer, to trust and dedication; God brings new beauty nigh;
reply, reply, reply with love to love most high.

To bow the head in sackcloth and in ashes, or rend the soul,
such grief is not Lent's goal;
but to be led to where God's glory flashes, his beauty to come near.
Make clear, make clear, make clear where truth and light appear.

For is not this the fast that I have chosen? (The prophet spoke)
To shatter every yoke,
of wickedness the grievous bands to loosen, oppression put to flight,
to fight, to fight, to fight till every wrong's set right.

For righteousness and peace will show their faces
to those who feed the hungry in their need, and wrongs redress, who build the old
waste places,
and in the darkness shine.
Divine, divine, divine it is when all combine!

Then shall your light break forth as doth the morning; your health shall spring,
the friends you make shall bring God's glory bright, your way through life adorning;
and love shall be the prize.
Arise, arise, arise! and make a paradise!

Hymn 145 “Now quit your care and anxious fear”
Words: Percy Dearmer (1867-1936), alt.
Tune: *Quittez, Pasteurs*, French carol; harm. Martin
Fallas Shaw (1875-1958). [Click the image to listen.](#)



Lent V, March 22

DO NOT BE AFRAID (OF LENT)

By Callie Gilchrist



Do not be afraid, for I am with you. Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. Surely, I will help you. Surely, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Isaiah 41:10

For years, in my mind, Lent was dreadful! In my previous choir, I knew Lent was coming because we started practicing and singing all of the music in Latin. I didn't know Latin, so it was tedious, packed with flat and low notes, and negative messages about 40 days in the wilderness. Lent was a "downer" season in that people were "giving up" things that made them happy. All I wanted to give up was "3 putts."

Several years ago, I participated in a Saturday morning mini-seminar at my Church that offered a better understanding of the season of Lent and its value to me as a Christian. I learned that it is a time of meditation, observation and reflection. It is a time of comfort as we slow down and read the reassurances of the scriptures. It is a time to "clean out" the clutter in our minds and focus on our God.

I chose Hymn 145 because instead of talking about the 40 days and walking through the wilderness (Ugh!), it starts with "Now quit your care and anxious fear and worry; for schemes are vain and fretting brings no gain. Lent calls to prayer, to trust and dedication; God brings new beauty nigh; reply, reply, reply with love, to love most high." There it is. It is the purpose of Lent and all God asks of us. He puts it right in our laps- 40 days dedicated to calming down and focusing on prayer and the scriptures via music, Bible Study, devotionals, books, etc. His promises of love and his power are repeated over and over again in the scriptures, if we will just come to him. All we have to do is give

Lent V, March 22

Do Not Be Afraid (of Lent) continued

our worries to him, open our hearts to the love that he promises, and trust.

I encourage you to enjoy these weeks of Lent. Answer God's invitation to "prayer, to trust and dedication". Be careful. You might just find yourself surrounded by God's love that "upholds you with his righteous right hand".





ST. MARY'S
ON THE HIGHLANDS

LENT
2026

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