

JOIN THE SAINTS THIS LENT
ON THE ROAD TO THE CROSS



BE THERE

Lenten Guide
Saint Joseph Parish 2022

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THE VISION

As Christ hung on the cross, He spoke earnestly, "I thirst." This Lent, our prayer study is an attempt to answer Jesus' longing for our hearts. The ultimate Lent is satisfying His thirst by our presence with Him in His suffering and death.



Call to mind the haunting question we hear every Lent, "Were you there when they...?" In our desire to be with Him, we look to the saints who were. They will accompany us each week, as we strive to be there with and for Jesus. They will become our examples, our intercessors, and our friends.

*Our response
to both quotes
is this study.*

OBJECTIVES

1. Provide opportunities for parishioners to be with Jesus.
2. Foster authentic friendship capable of discussing the interior life and spiritual experiences.
3. Create an avenue for hospitality and evangelization.
4. Encourage parish unity.

METHOD OPTIONS

Consider the following and select what is best for you right now. Ask Jesus to guide your decision.

1. **This Resource Guide**

Be with Him in His Word and in personal prayer.

2. **Small Groups**

Meet with a group for discussion.

3. **Weekly Priest Videos**

Receive encouragement and tips on the week's theme.

4. **Mass/Adoration**

Attend daily Mass. Commit to visiting church. Spend time in Adoration.

MATERIALS

1. Be There: Resource Guide
2. Bible
3. Videos (located on parish website)

APPENDICES

1. **Small Group Meetings**
resources
2. **Praying with Scripture**
detailed guide
3. **Hearing the Voice of God**
discernment tool

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE GUIDE

Every week, except Holy Week, will follow a similar format. Instructions for the different types of days are below:

Theme & Prayer

The initial reflection on Day 1 focuses on a particular theme and a corresponding saint. We will ask that saint to accompany us that week and help us remain present to Jesus in His Passion and Death. The following days will assist us in entering into the theme more deeply. The most important part of Day 1 is to ask for the companionship and intercession of the saint. Ask to be present to Jesus, just as they were. These saints are real people, still eternally alive. Your request for their friendship has real implications in your Lenten journey.

the concluding prayer moves us from intellectual engagement to a prayer of the heart. Pray the words slowly, pausing often to listen and savor the truth.

Meditation

These days are a chance to enter into the scene with the saint of the week and to be there with Jesus from their perspective and in their moment in history. Invite the Holy Spirit to guide your prayer. Read a short reflection from the saint's point of view. Imagine yourself in their position or witnessing the scene. Allow Jesus to reveal His love. End with gratitude for His presence and love.

Take-Aways

This is a chance to look back throughout the week. You can go back to a passage that spoke to you, read over a journal entry, or dive deeper into a reflection question. Invite the Holy Spirit to guide you. Call to mind God's presence, love, and mercy. Express gratitude for His faithfulness to you in prayer.

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE GUIDE

Praying with Scripture & Reflection Questions

Reference the appendices for a helpful and thorough explanation.

We are called to love God's Word. Praying with Scripture is a fruitful undertaking, because it allows us to be present to Him in His Word. His word is living and effective. Allowing the Scripture to sink into our minds, our hearts, and our lives can be challenging. Different ways of praying with His Word can be helpful. Ultimately, the goal of praying with Scripture is to have an encounter of love with the living God, which brings about more of His own divine life within us.

Option #1:

1. Settle your mind and invite the Holy Spirit to guide you.
2. Spend a few moments resting in the Father's presence.
3. Read the passage/verse slowly, pausing when a word or phrase stands out.
4. Be still and ponder what He is revealing to you.
5. Read the passage again, pausing when a word or phrase stands out.
6. Be still in what He is revealing to you.
7. Ask what are you revealing about Yourself? About me?
8. Conclude with gratitude for His presence and His goodness.
9. Write down any reflections.

Option #2

1. Recall God's presence with you, recognizing that He is there, simply waiting to encounter you in His love.
2. Read the passage slowly to familiarize yourself with it. You will be reading it again a few different times, each time focusing on a question to guide you.
3. Read the passage a second time. Through the lens of God's love for you, ask, "How does this reveal God's love and His love for me?"
4. Read the passage a third time. Through the lens of Jesus' infinite love for you, ask "How is He challenging me to love? How is He revealing the barriers I have to receiving more of His love?"
5. Read the passage a fourth time. Through the lens of grace, ask, "Knowing your personal love for me and hearing your challenge to allow it more deeply into my life, how do you want to bring this about?"
6. End with a prayer of gratitude for the Lord's loving gaze and time spent together.

Reflection Questions are meant to assist your prayer. Invite the Holy Spirit to guide your reflection, asking Him to reveal Himself in truth and love. Read through the questions, focusing on the one that stands out to you most. Speak or journal your experience directly to Jesus. Allow for some silence and listen for His response. It is better to answer one question with depth and some time for silence, rather than answering all the questions quickly.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BE THERE LENTEN GUIDE

ASH WEDNESDAY

Our Sorrowful Mother

P. 1



1ST SUNDAY OF LENT

Saint John the Apostle

P. 5



2ND SUNDAY OF LENT

Saint Longinus

P. 9



3RD SUNDAY OF LENT

Saint Joseph of Arimathea

P. 14



4TH SUNDAY OF LENT

Simon of Cyrene

P. 19



5TH SUNDAY OF LENT

Saint Veronica

P. 23



HOLY WEEK & EASTER

Saint Dismas

P. 27



ADDITIONAL CONTENTS

LENTEN BE THERE GUIDE

OUR CONTRIBUTORS	I
VISION	II
OVERVIEW	III
HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE	IV
APPENDIX I <i>Praying with Scriptures</i>	A 1
APPENDIX II <i>Hearing the Voice of God</i>	A 3
APPENDIX III <i>Small Groups</i>	A 4



Ash Wednesday

THEME

Prayer as Presence

SAINT

Mary, Our Sorrowful Mother



DAY 1: PRAYER AS PRESENCE

Jesus loves you and longs for intimacy with you. All that has happened and will happen in your lifetime is directed toward deeper unity with Him. In both crosses and blessings, He draws you to Himself, purifying your desires and widening the door to your heart. This relationship requires time, trust, and honesty. Throughout Lent, you can give the Crucified Lord the gift of your presence in quiet prayer, in Adoration, and in the celebration of the Mass.

Faithful presence is the gift Mary gave Jesus during His Passion. She did not intervene with the soldiers, shout down the crowds, or try to dissuade Jesus from the Father's will. Rather, she trusted Him and chose to stay by His side, remaining faithful in the face of torture and death. How could she do this, unless she had already spent many quiet hours being with the loving God? Her prayerful heart received the blessings of Jesus' birth, His miracles, and His resurrection, as well as the crosses of the flight into Egypt, the death of St. Joseph, and the Passion. She had pursued a deep unity with God through the silence and solitude of prayer and experienced the Passion in the exact same manner.

This week, focus on the gift of God's constant attentiveness to you and His unquenchable desire for your love. Approach your prayer time as an opportunity to be with the One who loves you.

Jesus, I offer my faithful presence to you. I come to be with you in all circumstances. Increase my trust in your constant and loving presence. From the cross, You proclaimed Your thirst for me. Jesus, I desire to know you and love you more deeply each day.



DAY 2: PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Pray with Luke 2:19

- How does viewing prayer as “being present with Jesus” change your commitment to prayer and your desire for it?
- Ponder the fact that God literally dwells in your heart through the Holy Spirit. How can we learn to ponder this fact daily?
- Just as Mary safeguarded these graces in her heart, what grace is Jesus calling me to treasure in my heart?

DAY 3: PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

John 19:25-27

- When have you felt abandoned by God? When you look back, can you see His hidden movements more clearly?
- When has God revealed His presence to you in prayer? When is it difficult to trust His presence in prayer? Why?
- Ask Mary to be your spiritual mother this Lent, leading you into deeper intimacy with her son, Jesus. Mary, lend me your heart. Come into my home and teach me to love your Son.

**Reminder: Use the “How To” and appendices as guides for prayer.
Answer the reflection question that stands out most.*



DAY 4: MARY'S TRUST (MEDITATION)

Pray: Holy Spirit come and open my heart. Lead me in prayer.

It took several soldiers to move the massive stone. A heavy boulder now enclosed the tomb of my Son. The hope of the world was dead, killed by those He came to save. My companions reluctantly turned to go; there was nothing more we could do. One by one, they walked past me, nodding a silent goodbye. Despair filled their eyes as they struggled to meet my gaze.

I understood their pity. If only they could understand my hope! Never, not once, had God abandoned me. In the most dire of situations, He made Himself known. His movements were often hidden and unexpected, but my trust was always rewarded. Whatever plan was now unfolding, it was at the service of Him being united to humanity more than ever before.

The last of the women had left and I was alone. I stepped forward and touched the cold stone that separated me from my Child. Had He abandoned us, after all that He had promised? No, He was simply moving in the most hidden and unexpected way. To think what will come, for the greater the darkness, the greater the light. I chose to trust: never abandoned, never separated. This hidden plan will reveal His heart and mine in due time.

**Reminder: Use the "How To" and appendices as guides for prayer.
Answer the reflection question that stands out most.*

Personal Notes

“My Mother was present in spirit in all the torments of My Passion by divine revelation...As soon as she knew that My death sentence had been pronounced she came forth to meet Me and did not leave Me any more till I was placed in the tomb.
-Jesus to Josefa Menendez”



First Sunday of Lent

THEME

Perseverance in Prayer

SAINT

John the Apostle



DAY 1: PERSEVERENCE IN PRAYER

In a fallen world, it is difficult to keep our hearts centered on Jesus. Pleasure and power occupy our time and attention. We look for ways to assert control and influence, and concern ourselves with gaining status and the good opinions of others. We know our thirst is only satisfied in Jesus, but all too often we search for fulfillment outside of Christ. These imperfect desires also affect our prayer. Instead of resting in the presence of Jesus, we try to negotiate and control. We evaluate our prayer with limited human understanding, failing to trust that He is present as promised and moving within us always. And when God doesn't work according to our expectations, we grow weary of prayer time. When He stays hidden, we believe ourselves and our prayers rejected. And yet, God calls us to persevere.

St. John the Apostle, through perseverance, experienced the purification of his desire for Jesus. One Gospel story records his request for a position of power in Christ's kingdom. Another account describes the apostles debating who among them is the greatest. Consider John's initial motivation for following Jesus. Wanting to be a part of the conquering side? Desiring some of the Messiah's power for himself or the status of being friends with the Messiah? It was through perseverance that John's desire for Jesus was purified. By choosing Jesus again and again, his love for Jesus deepened. When Jesus' path deviated from what many expected of the Messiah, John stayed. Jesus was scourged and crucified, and John stayed. He heard Jesus' words, "I thirst," and, "forgive them, Father", thereby experiencing a deeper understanding of God's love. Jesus wants us more than He wants power, pleasure, or status. The cross is Christ's rejection of anything less than love.

This week, focus on God's desire for you and His loving acceptance. In whatever imperfect way you approach Him, He is pleased by your perseverance. Commitment to being with Him is all that He needs. Come back to Him again and again. And He will reveal the depths of His love for you.

Jesus, I offer my faithful presence to You. You know me and understand me, loving me even in all my imperfections. Increase my trust in Your love. I want to remain with You always and love you more deeply each day.



DAY 2: PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Pray Mark 10:35-45

- What desires do you struggle to share with Jesus? Is there anything that you are afraid He will ask you to give up if you really surrender your life and follow Him? Speak openly and honestly with Him about whatever it is.
- Ponder the question that Jesus asks in this passage: "What do you want me to do for you?" Allow yourself to hear Jesus present that question to you. Search your heart for what answers come forward and tell Jesus about them.

DAY 3: PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Matthew 4:21-22

- How has perseverance affected a difficult situation in your life?
- When has it been difficult to persevere in prayer and relationship with God? Why?
- What "net" is Jesus asking you to drop to follow him more closely?

DAY 4: JOHN'S PERSEVERENCE (MEDIATION)

Holy Spirit come, open my heart. Teach me how to pray.

In my youth, I grew up imagining the glory afforded Israel's Messiah. For the past three years, I journeyed every day with Jesus who I believed to be that man. Never could I have guessed this. There He was, our Messiah, hanging from a cross. Voices, filled with hatred and contempt, called out from all around me, "He saved others, let him save himself." A chief priest standing nearby, shrieked, his eyes wild with fury. "Let the Messiah, the king of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe." I ached, knowing that He could come down on His own power. The memories burned within me: the healings, the dominion over nature, the Transfiguration. And yet, He remained on the cross, hated and rejected.

Continued on next page...

**Reminder: Use the "How To" and appendices as guides for prayer.
Answer the reflection question that stands out most.*



DAY 4 CONT: JOHN'S PERSEVERENCE

Slowly, with great effort, Jesus lifted His head and fixed His pained gaze on me. Tears filled my eyes, for my Friend's look was one of pure agony, pure love. He gasped for another breath and staring straight at me with pleading eyes, he whispered, "I thirst." My heart was pierced by His love. He cared nothing for displays of power. To the very end, He wanted me.

DAY 5: PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

John 13:23

- How can you be more present to Jesus today?
- Do you see yourself as "the one who Jesus loves"? How have you encountered His love? What makes it difficult to believe yourself unconditionally loved by God?
- Close your eyes and imagine yourself resting your head on Jesus' chest. How does this make you feel? Loved? Uncomfortable? At peace? Restless? Stay there for a few minutes. Bring to Him what comes up for you.

DAY 6: PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

John 19:25-28

- How has Jesus revealed His love for you through Mary, your mother? When has Mary's presence and example helped you persevere in faith?
- When has God revealed His patience and acceptance of you through a loved one?

DAY 7: TAKE-AWAYS

What most stood out to you this week?

**Reminder: Use the "How To" and appendices as guides for prayer.
Answer the reflection question that stands out most.*

Personal Notes

“And leaning against the bosom
of Jesus, was one of His
disciples, the one whom Jesus
loved.”

John 13:23



Second Sunday of Lent

THEME

Clarity through Prayer

SAINT

Longinus



DAY 1: CLARITY THROUGH PRAYER

Prayer is often approached as a chance to hash out choices and plans with God. We spend time trying to "figure things out" and devote most of our attention to discerning the path forward. We grow increasingly restless in the face of God's silence or frustrated by messages that seem contradictory and unclear. When we are anxious to be "in the know" and to move forward with life's decisions, we often forget to come to Christ in love and trust. Our relationship with God is made secondary to our compulsion to know His Will here and now.

A heart centered on being in Christ's company is able to rest in the tension of not always knowing. God is not trying to be elusive, deceptive, or withholding. Rather, He reveals what we need to know at the proper time. Longinus, the centurion who pierced Jesus' side, reminds us to have patience in God's timing. After he opened Christ's heart—where blood and water poured out—he received the revelation of Jesus' divinity. Simply by being near Jesus, he came to know God and His plan. If we go to Jesus to appreciate His presence, to be near Him, He will ensure that we know His Will and whatever is necessary to move closer to Him and closer to heaven.

This week, focus on being with Christ in your confusion or lack of clarity. Place before Him your questions, doubts, and desires. And then, rest in the belief that He reveals Himself and His Will in perfect timing.

Jesus, I offer You my faithful presence. I want to follow Your every wish and command, molding my life to Your perfect will. Take from me the fear that I will not understand Your directions. Infuse in my heart trust in Your ability to make Your plans known to me in Your timing. May I desire You more and more each day. I want to remain with You forever.



DAY 2: PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Pray with Matthew 27:51-54

- What current decisions are you trying to make according to God's will? How does placing these questions in His hands and then resting with Him change your prayer time?
- Do you really believe that "Truly, this was the Son of God?" If so, are you living like you do? If not, what keeps you from believing?
- Pray: Lord, please increase my faith. Help me to truly know you.

DAY 3: PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Mark 15:33-39

- Put yourself in this scene. Imagine Jesus' face and dead body. You are the one who must pierce Him. What stirs in your heart as you undertake this task? Allow yourself to be immersed in the blood, the mercy, flowing from His side.
- When have you experienced confusion in prayer and discernment? How did God, in the proper time, reveal His will for you?

DAY 4: THE REVELATION TO LONGINUS (MEDITATION)

Holy Spirit open my heart. Lead me into the heart of Christ.

I knelt, conscious of Jesus' Body and Blood now within me. Receiving Holy Communion today still takes me back to the first day I encountered my Lord. What a gift it was to me! I had been lost for so long, searching for purpose, for some kind of reason for my life. I had taken a position in the Roman army, hoping to find direction by serving something larger than myself. Instead, I had become numb, detached. My body deteriorated—a product of age and the hard work of a soldier. My eyesight had been slowly fading and I feared what it meant for my future. But a soldier shouldn't complain and I continued to fulfill my duties. It was this very work that would lead me to encounter Jesus of Nazareth. I was the one who brought about His crucifixion.

**Reminder: Use the "How To" and appendices as guides for prayer.
Answer the reflection question that stands out most.*



DAY 4 CONT...: THE REVELATION TO LONGINUS

But how good is the Lord! Even though my actions, were wounding Him, He was still able to reach out to me, because I was near. I remember receiving the order. Midday was coming and the criminals needed to die soon, so we could remove their bodies from the crosses that lined the roads. Jesus had already handed over His spirit; heaven and earth had released its sorrow, shaking the ground and tearing open the sky. I remember approaching His lifeless body, unsure of who He was. I hesitated, recalling His willingness, His determination, His silence. Never before had I witnessed such strength in the face of torture and death, and I was a long-time soldier. I took a deep breath and plunged the lance deep into His side. Blood and water poured out, sprinkling my face. Immediately, I could see. Looking up, my renewed sight beheld the crucified Body of Christ. Never before had I felt so sure of the truth. He was who He had claimed to be: the Son of God.

Since that day, I have had but one aim. The path forward hasn't always been clear or easy, but one purpose keeps me focused. I want to be where He is. And so, it is with this love and gratitude that I receive the Body and Blood of Christ as often as I am allowed. To be with Him at Mass is to be near Him once again.

DAY 5: PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

John 19:31-37

- Place yourself in this scene. Imagine looking up at "Him whom they have pierced". Read it again, slowly. Pray: Holy Spirit come, please reveal to me the heart of God.
- When have you experienced God revealing Himself to you? (Truly this is the Son of God...)
- How can you be more present to Jesus in the Mass? In Adoration?

**Reminder: Use the "How To" and appendices as guides for prayer.
Answer the reflection question that stands out most.*



DAY 6: PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Matthew 11:25-26

- Do I find myself drawn more to the 'wisdom' of this world or to the wisdom of God? Do I rely on the plans of man to save the world?
- What makes it hard to trust He is guiding your prayer? What freedom would you experience by trusting both His desire to reveal His will to you and the perfection of His timing?

DAY 7: TAKE-AWAYS

What stood out to you this week?

**Reminder: Use the "How To" and appendices as guides for prayer.
Answer the reflection question that stands out most.*

Personal Notes

“Truly, this man was the
Son of God.
St. Longinus in Mark 15:39”



Third Sunday of Lent

THEME

Courage in Prayer

SAINT

Joseph of Arimathea



DAY 1: COURAGE IN PRAYER

It is easy to resist or neglect silence and solitude. Our lives are filled with people to love and serve. In an effort to be charitable, we prioritize work and service while simultaneously devaluing our prayer. Being busy keeps us from the silence—the very silence that makes us face what we wish to avoid. Even in our prayer, we can approach it with a similar “staying busy” mindset, filling the time with formal prayers, devotions, and reading, avoiding the silence. These practices should remain at the service of our relationship with God, but all too often they allow us to pray without vulnerability. We stay busy even in the silence and solitude. As we approach Jesus, wanting to be with Him, what fears rise up within? What makes you hesitate to give of yourself completely in prayer?

Read these passages and try to notice which ones you identify with most:

PRAYER IS BORING.

I'M NOT SURE IF GOD IS PRESENT.

I'M NOT SURE HOW TO LISTEN.

I DON'T FEEL LIKE PRAYING.

I DON'T WANT TO FIND OUT IF GOD IS PRESENT.

I'M AFRAID THAT I'M "DOING IT WRONG."

SERVING IS MORE EFFECTIVE THAN PRAYER.

I DON'T WANT TO FIND OUT THAT GOD DOESN'T CARE.

THERE ARE THINGS I DON'T WANT TO FACE OR TALK ABOUT WITH GOD.

PRAYER IS POINTLESS.

GOD DOESN'T CARE ABOUT ME.

I'M AFRAID OF WHAT HE WILL ASK ME.

I DON'T WANT TO BE ALL IN; I WANT TO BE WELL-BALANCED.

I'M NOT GOOD ENOUGH.

JESUS SPEAKS TO OTHER PEOPLE, BUT NOT ME.

I'M TOO BUSY.

WHAT IF HE DOESN'T RESPOND?

I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M SUPPOSED TO BE DOING.

I PRAY "ON MY FEET".

HE WON'T HEAR ME.

I DON'T KNOW HOW TO JUST REST WITH HIM.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE.

I DON'T HEAR ANYTHING.

I HAVEN'T HEARD ANYTHING IN QUITE SOME TIME.

I'D RATHER LEARN TO DEFEND MY FAITH THAN SIT IN SILENCE.

I NEED TO FIX _____ FIRST.

I'M ONE PERSON IN PRAYER AND ANOTHER PERSON OUTSIDE OF PRAYER.

PRAYER IS AWKWARD.

PRAYER IS FOR OTHER PEOPLE, JUST NOT ME.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT HE IS SAYING OR ASKING OF ME.



DAY 1 CONT...: COURAGE IN PRAYER

Joseph of Arimathea believed in Jesus and wanted to follow Him more closely, but he kept Jesus at arm's length. His faith was hidden and secretive. It is not until after Jesus had suffered and died that Joseph finally made the decision to draw near, offering his own tomb for Jesus' burial. In witnessing the wounded and pierced Lord, he was able to move past his fear. He recognized that Christ gave up everything for him; he was unwilling to give up everything for Jesus. In dying on the cross, Jesus' arms were extended wide open, offering comfort, protection, and love.

This week, focus on being present to Jesus in silence and solitude. Resist the urge to place a greater emphasis on "doing," whether it be acts of service or accomplishing a list of prayers. Prioritize being with Jesus and bringing before Him what you fear most about going deeper with Him in prayer.

Jesus, I offer You my faithful presence. I want to be with You and ask that my service flows from our time together. Increase my trust in You and Your unconditional love for me. I ask for courage to be honest with my resistance to growing closer to You. I want to remain with You always.

DAY 2: PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

John 19:38-42

- Is there a particular word or phrase that stands out to you in this passage? What may the Holy Spirit be trying to tell you through this word or phrase? Relate this to Jesus. Pray: Jesus, help me to hear your voice and to follow you not only in secret, but at all times.
- After reading the passage, reference the chart from Day 1. What fear(s) stood out to you? Bring it to Jesus.

**Reminder: Use the "How To" and appendices as guides for prayer.
Answer the reflection question that stands out most.*



DAY 3: PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Matthew 27:57-61

- Is there a particular word or phrase that stands out to you in this passage? What may the Holy Spirit be trying to tell you through this word or phrase? Relate this to Jesus. Pray: Jesus, help me to seek to do your will boldly.
- What is a fear you used to have about growing closer to Jesus? How was it resolved?
- How do your circumstances make it difficult to put Jesus and prayer first?

DAY 4: JOSEPH'S COURAGE (MEDITATION)

Holy Spirit come, open my heart. Teach me how to pray.

I approached the body of Jesus, lifeless and hanging from the cross. The dead weight of His body pulled on his hands and feet, still attached by the cruel, rough iron nails. He was not recognizable, so disfigured was His face and body. Leaning against the cross' post was a woman, her forehead pressing into the wood. Her body slumped forward with exhaustion and grief. Only a few soldiers and Jewish elders remained; many had already gone home. It was their presence that made me anxious, for underneath my robes I had hidden burial cloths. Privately, Pilate, had already granted me Jesus' body, but now I had to claim Him. For so long I had followed Him with interest, and eventually with faith, but never publicly. I stood frozen in place, unable to step forward and unwilling to leave.

The woman, Jesus' mother, looked up and gazed at her dead Son. She spoke softly, her voice tired, but sure: "See how He died? With arms open wide. Yes, my Son loved that much." Her eyes remained fixed on Jesus, but I knew her words were meant for me. My desire to be with Him, to be near Him, could no longer be denied. I stepped forward.

**Reminder: Use the "How To" and appendices as guides for prayer.
Answer the reflection question that stands out most.*



DAY 5: PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Mark 15:43-47

- When you place yourself in this scene and gaze upon the lifeless body of the Lord, what fills your heart?
- How can courage affect your prayer life?
- What action is Christ calling you to take?

DAY 6: PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Luke 23:50-56

- Is there a particular word or phrase that stands out to you in this passage? What does this passage reveal about God? Pray: Jesus, help me to be good and righteous, as a fruit of my relationship with you.
- How can you claim Jesus privately?
- How can you claim Jesus publicly?

DAY 7: TAKE-AWAYS

Look back over the content from this week. What has God revealed about Himself? What has He revealed about you?

**Reminder: Use the "How To" and appendices as guides for prayer.
Answer the reflection question that stands out most.*

Personal Notes

“He quite literally touched the true poverty of our Lord, felt it, smelled it, and embraced it. His own hands took the limp, lifeless, and mangled body of Jesus from the Cross. His wealth mingled intimately with Jesus' poverty. He risked in order to give. He gave in order to love.”

-excerpt from original Be Here study



LAETARE SUNDAY

Fourth Sunday of Lent

THEME

Hope in Prayer

WITNESS

Simon of Cyrene



DAY 1: HOPE IN PRAYER

Each person experiences suffering. The difficulties we face can be the result of our choices, but often they are the effect of someone else's choices or circumstances. Sometimes a person's crosses are few, but intense and heavy. For most people, trials are small, but many. The mundane wears us down and increases our doubt. We wonder why a loving God allows His chosen ones to suffer so much. We watch innocent souls and loved ones struggle. The days can feel long and we grow weary. Why must we endure the difficulties and circumstances? Will they ever change? In our prayer, we seek or demand an explanation from Jesus. We want to see the value of our suffering now. And when we want an answer, we are all too often faced with heaven's silence.

It is into this doubt and silence that Christ carried His cross. Consider the doubts of Israel and men like Simon. They experienced occupations over and over again. Simon knew the tyranny of Rome, the crucifixions, the brutality. For generations, God's chosen people had prayed for the Messiah. For centuries, God's answer was silence. Imagine Simon's inner-thoughts as he was forced to approach the cross. Could he have anticipated the result of his actions? He suffered the humiliation and physical pain of helping a condemned and tortured man, thereby assisting in the salvation of humanity. Through Christ's presence and participation, what appeared senseless and meaningless became of eternal value. His suffering was transformed into the gift of salvation. And just as important, by suffering alongside Jesus, Simon's suffering became bound to His. They were united in their shared pain, united in the triumph of the cross.

This week, focus on being alongside Jesus in the crosses you carry. Place before Him what seems meaningless, irritating, or senseless. Rest in His strength and the hope that He will transform your sufferings. Just as Simon did not know what effect he was having on all of humanity, trust that Jesus receives your crosses with the same intention: to assist in salvation and to bind you even closer to Him.

Jesus, I offer my faithful presence to You. I accept the crosses You have allowed in my life and seek Your company, instead of demanding Your explanations. Free me from the need to see the end results of my sacrifices. I ask that You increase my trust in Your ability to make all things new. In joys and sorrows, I want to remain with you always.



DAY 2: PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Matthew 27:32

- Place yourself in this scene as Simon. How would you feel? Is your focus on the crowds, on the injustice of Rome, or on Jesus?
- What aspects of life seem meaningless and senseless?
- What crosses have you had to accept and carry?

DAY 3: PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

2 Corinthians 1:3-7

- Pray: Holy Spirit, teach me to pray with this passage. Read it again slowly. Jesus, speak to my heart. What stands out to you about Jesus in this passage?
- Jesus does not desire you to suffer alone. How can you unite your sufferings to His?
- How can suffering expand your love for Jesus and others?

DAY 3: SIMON'S HOPE (MEDITATION)

Holy Spirit come. Open my heart. Lead my prayer.

He fell again, and this time the splintered, rough wood of His cross landed squarely on my back. Its weight pressed my face into the dirt and sand, choking me. I coughed and gasped for air as I struggled to move out from underneath the cross. My relief wasn't long. The soldiers' screams to get up and continue on were accompanied by their whips, tearing into me. I desperately searched the horizon for our destination. My heart sank; it was still so far away and my strength was almost gone. As I pushed myself onto my knees, a barb struck the center of my back, sending shooting pains through my whole body. Why get up? Why go on? They are going to kill him anyway. What difference does it make if he dies here or there?

I felt a trembling hand touch my foot. It was covered in blood and shook with exhaustion. I looked down to see him staring back at me, his gaze intense and desperate. Slowly, he tried to speak, but I could only read the words on his lips.

**Reminder: Use the "How To" and appendices as guides for prayer.
Answer the reflection question that stands out most.*



DAY 4 CONT...: SIMON'S HOPE

"Simon, help me." Startled, I leaned away. How did he know my name? I had heard stories about this holy man, Jesus, but I had never met Him before.

Filled with disbelief in the face of His determination, I pleaded, "Why? What good will it do?"

He reached out and grasped my arm. This time, His words came slowly, but clearly. "All things work for the good of God."

I pulled him up to his knees and moved towards the cross, "Then we finish."

DAY 5: PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Luke 23:26

- Jesus often desires to help us through the people closest to us. Do I allow Jesus to serve me through others? In what ways do you need to humble yourself and accept help from others?
- In what ways do you try to carry your crosses by yourself, without Jesus' strength and encouragement?

DAY 6: SIMON'S HOPE

Romans 8:18, 28

- What is an area you need to ask Jesus for more hope? Pray: Jesus, increase my faith that "in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose." Help me to seek your will above my own, and to trust in you with my entire heart.
- Who is Jesus asking you to help?

DAY 7: TAKE-AWAYS

How is your Lent going so far? Look back over the content of this study. How has your understanding of Jesus and relationship with Him grown? What part of your commitment do you need to renew?

**Reminder: Use the "How To" and appendices as guides for prayer.
Answer the reflection question that stands out most.*

Personal Notes

Living on love is not setting up one's tent
At the top of Calvary.
It's climbing Calvary with Jesus,
It's looking at the Cross as a treasure!
In Heaven I'm to live on joy.
Then trials will have fled forever
But in exile, in suffering I want
So live on love.

First stanza of a Poem by
Saint Theresese of Lisieux



Fifth Sunday of Lent

THEME

*From Prayer to
Simple Charity*

SAINT

Veronica



DAY 1: FROM PRAYER TO SIMPLE CHARITY

Our Lenten journey continues to focus on being present to Jesus. This is the greatest gift we can give Him, even though it can seem too simple or small. Why does He settle for just our hearts, when He could lay hold of the whole world? In our desire to serve Jesus and His kingdom, we turn our focus away from being with Him. We pay lip service to the importance of prayer, but truly believe the answer lies in rolling up our sleeves and getting to work. Our desire for Jesus slowly twists into grandiose plans. We find ourselves claiming, 'if only the Church would do this particular idea, all would be well!' Or we look out into the broken world and choose cynicism or apathy, not sure if it is even worth saving. Paralyzed by powerlessness and unable to decide what to do, we do nothing. And all that time, Jesus patiently waits for us to come and be with Him.

Veronica answered His desire. She placed a loving encounter with Christ before everything else. She approached Him with a simple action of love. She did not risk the angry crowds and violent soldiers to enact a grand plan or scheme. She did not stand on the side, watching Jesus go by, and say to herself, "What good would a sip of water do for Him now?" She saw Christ in front of her and she chose a simple act of love. Jesus multiplied her gift, as He always does, by imprinting His Holy Face on her veil. Centuries later, many can speak of the heroism and love of Veronica, the woman who wiped the face of Jesus.

This week, recognize how Jesus wants to be with you more than anything else. Consider how often Jesus' desire for people to be with Him goes unanswered, how many people let Him walk right by. Approach Him with a desire to be simple and small. Commit to loving Him and serving Him in whatever person He places in your path.

Jesus, I offer my faithful presence to You. I know this gift is small, not worthy of You. But, it is what You desire of me and I wish to please You above all else. Open my eyes to Your presence in others. I want to love You by being present to them and loving them simply. I ask to remain with You always.



DAY 2: PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Psalm 4:7-9

- How well do I seek the face of Jesus in my life? In prayer? In my family? My friends? My enemies? The poor?
- Do you prioritize working for Jesus over being with Jesus? How? Why? Do you believe that encountering Jesus in prayer will change the world? How?

DAY 3: PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Psalm 27:8

- Consider the “face of God” in Jesus’ stages of life: infancy, childhood, His ministry, His passion, His resurrection, the Eucharist. Choose one that stands out to you. Spend a few minutes content to gaze upon His Sacred Countenance with love.

DAY 4: VERONICA'S CHARITY (MEDITATION)

Holy Spirit come, open my heart. Teach me how to pray.

Standing in my doorway, bloodied veil in hand, I could see Calvary in the distance. The darkened, afternoon sky made it difficult to see clearly, but I could make out the shapes of three crosses, erected high enough for all to see and fear. I lived in the shadow of Rome’s executions, but never before had it hurt so much. For today, Jesus was their victim. I remember the first time I saw Him. He stood high on a mountain, bathed in golden sunlight, speaking a message of peace and love. And His repayment? Torture and crucifixion.

Earlier this morning, after His sentencing, I knew I had to see Him one more time. I needed to be near Him, to show Him my love, my faith. When He had passed by, to my horror, I barely recognized Him. His face was completely disfigured: swollen, bloody. Instinctively, I pushed through the crowds, took off my veil and began wiping away His sweat and blood. My heart ached; I wanted to do so much more. But before I could, I was grabbed and shoved aside, colliding with a nearby wall. I blindly made my way home, the whole time my head throbbing and a cut on my

**Reminder: Use the “How To” and appendices as guides for prayer.
Answer the reflection question that stands out most.*



DAY 4 CONT...: VERONICA'S CHARITY (MEDITATION)

face bleeding. Now, I stood here in my doorway, looking up at Calvary, wondering if my actions had made any difference at all. I hadn't stopped His death. I had barely relieved His pain. It wasn't enough.

My view of Jesus' cross clouded as fresh tears streamed down my face. I lifted my veil to wipe the tears away, but instead beheld the cloth saturated with the blood of my Lord. I opened the veil to see its entirety and gasped. Staring back at me was His Face, this time bathed in blood. His words came rushing back, "Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God." My love, my heart, was enough.

DAY 5: PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Matthew 5:3-10

- How are the beatitudes best exemplified in Christ crucified? Pray and ask: Lord, which beatitude are you calling me to grow in this Lent? Grant me the grace to do so.
- How is Jesus calling you to love simply?

DAY 6: PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Matthew 25:40

- How has meditating on the face of Christ helped you notice Him in those around you? Who is Jesus placing before you, asking you to love them in simplicity?
- When have you recognized Christ in someone you were serving?
- Do you treat people differently based on his/her social status? Their ability to repay you? Pray: Lord, purify my heart to be like yours. Help me to see people with your eyes.

DAY 7: TAKE-AWAYS

What most stood out to you this week?

**Reminder: Use the "How To" and appendices as guides for prayer.
Answer the reflection question that stands out most.*

Canticle to the Holy Face.

By Saint Therese of Lisieux

Dear Jesus! 'tis Thy Holy Face
Is here the start that guides my way;
Thy countenance, so full of grace,
Is heaven on earth, for me, to-day.
And love finds holy charms for me
In Thy sweet eyes with tear-drops wet;
Through mine own tears I smile at Thee,
And in Thy griefs my pains forget.
How gladly would I live unknown,
Thus to console Thy aching heart.
Thy veiled beauty, it is shown
To those who live from earth apart.
I long to fly to Thee alone!
Thy Face is now my fatherland,
The radiant sunshine of my days,
My realm of love, my sunlit land,
Where, all life long, I sing Thy praise;
It is the lily of the vale,
Whose mystic perfume, freely given,
Brings comfort, when I faint and fail,
And makes me taste the peace of heaven.
Thy face, in its unearthly grace,
Is like the divinest myrrh to me,
That on my heart I gladly place;
It is my lyre of melody;
My rest my comfort is Thy Face.
My only wealth, Lord! is thy Face;
I ask naught else than this from Thee;
Hid in the secret of that Face,
The more I shall resemble Thee!
Oh, leave on me some impress faint
Of Thy sweet, humble, patient Face,
And soon I shall become a saint,
And draw men to Thy saving grace.
So, in the secret of Thy Face,
Oh! hide me, hide me, Jesus blest!
Ther let me find its hidden grace,
Its holy fires, and, in heaven's rest,
Its rapturous kiss, in Thy embrace!



PALM SUNDAY

Sixth Sunday of Lent

THEME

*Receive God's
Mercy in
Prayer*
SAINT

Dismas, the Good Thief



PALM SUNDAY: RECEIVE GOD'S MERCY IN PRAYER

Today marks the beginning of Holy Week, when we experience the total revelation of God's love. Jesus' hour has come; He steps forward to pay the price for our sins, to heal our broken relationship with God. The innocent Christ willingly sacrifices Himself and we are saved. We are reunited to the Father.

Jesus Christ offers you this salvation, this healed union with God. Imagine Jesus nailed to the cross, standing tall on Mount Calvary. The world presented Jesus in His last moments as a criminal, a weak and helpless victim, a failure. And He accepted it willingly. He was hated, mocked, scourged, tortured, and killed. He willingly suffered and died. All of this He endured at the hands of those He loves, those He came to save. If that wasn't enough, He chose to proclaim the totality of His love from the pulpit of the cross. "Forgive them, Father."

This week, focus on the redemptive and merciful love of Jesus. Be with Him in His final days. Offer Him your contrition, your gratitude, and your love. Be there to receive His mercy.

Jesus, I offer You my faithful presence. Your mercy is overwhelming. I have sinned against You and You forgive again and again. I want to be with you, accompanying You in your final days. I want to be with you, ready to receive the forgiveness and salvation You offer me. I want to be with you, so I too may extend Your mercy to others. Jesus, draw me close to You this week. I want to remain with You forever.

HOLY MONDAY: PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Luke 23:32-34

- Imagine yourself at the foot of the cross, Christ speaking these words directly to you. What moves in your heart? Be still and receive His mercy.
- What habitual sins or past sins cause you to feel ashamed? What makes it difficult to entrust them to Jesus' mercy and forgiveness?
- Pick a time to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Encounter Jesus' mercy.

**Reminder: Use the "How To" and appendices as guides for prayer.
Answer the reflection question that stands out most.*



FIG TUESDAY: RECEIVE GOD'S MERCY IN PRAYER

When we think about the saints of the Passion, we remember our mother, Mary, and the beloved disciple, St. John. Our church's history is filled with the examples and good works of incredible people: spiritual giants, zealous preachers, devout religious. These canonized saints all witness to God's glory and the reality of His grace. It was Jesus, hanging from the cross, who actually declared the first saint. And it wasn't one of His apostles or disciples. It wasn't a devout Jew, a high priest, or a person of good repute. Rather, Jesus chooses the criminal crucified next to Him.

St. Dismas, the good thief, makes an act of faith in his dying moments that ends up revealing God's greatest attribute: mercy. He knows he is unworthy, but he also believes that Jesus is his only chance for salvation. In his humility, he recognizes who Jesus is, the Son of God, and who he is, a sinner in need of saving. And Jesus proclaims him saved, destined for heaven. St. Dismas is a saint of God's unfathomable mercy. Even humanity had deemed him unworthy of life, but Jesus granted him eternal life.

This is the mercy of God.

Jesus, I offer You my faithful presence. Thank you for loving me, for loving all Your children. You do not withhold Your forgiveness from anyone who comes to You. Increase my trust in Your mercy and challenge my belief in its bounds. Allow me to see Your mercy is for all my brothers and sisters. I want to be with You and receive all You have to offer me. I want to remain with You forever.

**Reminder: Use the "How To" and appendices as guides for prayer.
Answer the reflection question that stands out most.*



HOLY THURSDAY: PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Luke 23:39-43

- Place yourself in Dismas' place. Pray: Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Receive Jesus' response. Notice how deeply you desire Jesus and eternal life with Him.
- Place yourself in St. John's place, hearing Jesus proclaim this criminal destined for heaven. Do you restrict God's mercy for certain people? Certain sins?

GOOD FRIDAY: PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Pray with one of the following passages.

The Soldiers Mock Jesus - Mark 15:16-20

The Death of Jesus - Luke 23:44-49

The Crucifixion - John 19:17-30

Jesus' Side is Pierced - John 19:31-37

- Place yourself in the scene (observer, a soldier, member of the crowd, a follower). Watch how Jesus suffers. Know that these actions and words are meant for you.
- Remain at the foot of the cross. Be present to Him in His final hour.

HOLY SATURDAY: REVIEW OF YOUR LENT

- Review a passage, meditation, or reflection question that impacted you these last few weeks.
- How has your understanding of God changed? How has your relationship with God transformed this Lent?

**Reminder: Use the "How To" and appendices as guides for prayer.
Answer the reflection question that stands out most.*

Personal Notes

“ Tell asking mankind to
snuggle close to my most
merciful heart and I will fill
it with peace.
Jesus to Faustina in Diary 1074 ”

EASTER SUNDAY

The following can be used during the Octave of Easter. Provided are a few passages to move you into the season of Resurrection and the next part of your journey with Jesus.

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

Pray with Luke 24:1-12

- Place yourself in the scene. Imagine being one of the women or receiving the news as Peter did. What moves in your heart? Pray: Jesus, fill my heart with the hope and joy of Your resurrection.
- How deep does your belief in the resurrection go? How does the reality of Jesus' resurrection change your hope? Your courage? Your willingness to persevere in prayer? Your desire to love better?

APPEARANCE ON ROAD TO EMMAUS

Pray with Luke 24:13-35

- Place yourself in the scene. Imagine the despair these disciples felt and their awe at Jesus' wisdom of the Scriptures. Now, consider what happened as Jesus offered the Mass, how they immediately recognized Him and the astonishment they felt. Pray: Jesus, open my eyes to Your Real Presence in the Eucharist. Make my heart burn with love for You.
- What is your commitment to the Eucharist? How can you be present to Him in the Real Presence?

THE COMMISSIONING OF THE DISCIPLES

Pray with Matthew 28:16-20

- What is Jesus asking of you in this new season of Easter?
- Reflect on His words, "I am with you always, until the end of the age?" How can you continue to prioritize being present to Him in prayer?
- How is God calling you to reach out to others? Continuing a small group? Setting up a monthly meeting with a friend? Committing to regular Adoration or attending Mass more often?

**Reminder: Use the "How To" and appendices as guides for prayer.
Answer the reflection question that stands out most.*

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Method & Explanation by Sara Racicot

If you struggle to pray with Scripture, to visualize a scene, or to hear the Holy Spirit during your Scripture prayer, this is an extended and helpful set of instructions to try to disarm you and encourage you in your Scripture prayer.

Step One: Settle Down

A basic difference between reading scripture and praying with scripture happens from the very beginning when you set about to start the process. Choose a method to “settle down” or “get in the right head and heart space.”

Here are some easy methods you can try:

- Imagine Jesus’ face looking at you as you look at Him. Soak in the feeling of being seen by Jesus and He being seen by you. Let the intimacy between you and Jesus sink in and sit in the moment.
- Take note of what is distracting you (could be stressors, simple noises, your to do list, etc.). Imagine holding your distractions in your hands and then handing them over to the Blessed Mother, just as children hand their moms things to hold while they go play. She will take care of these things until you are done with your Scripture and she will give them back if you want them back.
- Say a short prayer to the Holy Spirit:
 - “Speak Lord, your servant is listening.”
 - “Come Holy Spirit.”
 - “Holy Spirit, you are welcome here.”
 - “Holy Spirit, you do the work.”

Step Two: Make and Act of Trust

Another difference between reading scripture and praying with scripture is that when we pray with scripture we “savor” it. Think about what that means-to savor something. Savoring involves slow, appreciative, reflective enjoyment of an object. Imagine the difference between a meal that is savored and one that is quickly eaten for sustenance. The savored meal is slowly delighted in, each flavor, texture, and scent is appreciated. The quickly eaten meal is barely recognized besides for the nutrients that are deposited on its way through our system.

When you pray with scripture you will savor parts of the stories and words that you likely haven’t noticed before. You will read slowly and in the mindset that the Holy Spirit, Himself, will bring out new images, emotions, and small details, thereby allowing you to receive something you might have normally glanced over.

Step Two: Make an Act of Trust Continued...

This savoring requires a very important element, an act of trust in the Holy Spirit to actually show up and do the work that praying with Scripture requires. It also requires an act of trust that we are allowed to use our imagination to pray. We often wrestle in prayer with what is the voice of God and what is our imagination. Our skepticism and desire for certainty can get in the way of letting the Holy Spirit use our imaginations as His instrument. In your praying with Scripture it is proper to lay this battle of deciphering down and trust that what you are imagining and experiencing is from the Holy Spirit.

Step Three: Read Slowly, Use Your Senses, Emotions, and Intellect, Notice What Stands Out.

It is also important to note that when you pray with a bible passage you will read it slowly, and "savoringly." Use your five senses to imagine the scene. Be aware that the Holy Spirit works in different ways for different people and at different times. If it is difficult to actually visualize details (which is a common struggle), remain at peace with how He directs your prayer. He uses our senses, emotions, and intellect to reveal Himself. Take note of any images, words, feelings, questions, or sensations that stick out. It is important to remember that you do not need to know why they stood out. That is for the Holy Spirit to reveal in His own time, for now just take note of 'it', whatever 'it' is, and go back to 'it' as you read the passage again.

Step Four: Read Slowly Again Noticing Any Movements of Imagination, Emotion, Images, Etc.

Read the passage slowly again. Notice the nugget that you picked up on your last reading (step 3). Savor that nugget by allowing extra time on that one word, scene, question, or emotion, and repeat your act of trust to the Holy Spirit to do the work. Resist the urge to control the direction of the prayer, but ponder what is placed in front of you. Let the idea, image, or emotion develop. Remain in the truth that the Holy Spirit guides all prayer and directs all revelation and He will do the work.

Step Five: Final Reading

Read the passage a final time with the same openness and savoring as before. Do not fret if answers or explanations do not come. Instead, this may be the Holy Spirit's way of inviting you back to this passage for another session later.

Step Six: Closure and Thanksgiving

Thank the Holy Spirit for this time and for His action in your prayer. You can be specific if there is a certain moment or consolation you received or you can be thankful simply for what you know was accomplished without you being aware of it. If you like, you can journal at this point about your experience and any consolations or experiences you received. You can ask the Holy Spirit to reveal if there is an action He wants you to take from this experience. Say a Glory Be to end your session giving Glory to God for his living, moving, active Word.

HEARING THE VOICE OF GOD

God's Voice	Satan's Voice
<p>Stills you</p> <p>Leads you</p> <p>Reassures you</p> <p>Enlightens you</p> <p>Encourages you</p> <p>Comforts you</p> <p>Calms you</p> <p>Convicts you</p>	<p>Rushes you</p> <p>Pushes you</p> <p>Frightens you</p> <p>Confuses you</p> <p>Discourages you</p> <p>Worries you</p> <p>Obsesses you</p> <p>Condemns you</p>
<p>God is never early and He is never late. He is always right on time and His plans for you are good. God is a God of love and order.</p>	<p>If the voice you are hearing doesn't sound like goodness, love, and order, then it is not from God.</p>

Ways God Speaks To Us:

1. Hearing - "thought" voice
2. Seeing - Imagination
3. Feeling - ex: that feeling in the pit of your stomach
4. Knowing - Graced knowledge in a moment

SMALL GROUP MEETINGS

Group meetings should prioritize talking about your personal relationship with Christ and encouraging one another in that same pursuit. The provided discussion questions can be adjusted for the number of group meetings and the length of each meeting.

Tips for Group Discussion

- Begin with prayer. It can be spontaneous or a Scripture meditation.
- Invite the Holy Spirit into your discussion.
- Emphasize talking about prayer and what Christ is revealing to you in prayer.
- Take a moment of silence to review the reflection questions from that particular week.
- Discuss:
 - Any of the reflection questions
 - What is Christ revealing to you in prayer?
 - What is something that struck you in the passages or meditations?
- Remember, be selective in the questions that you ask.
 - Resist the urge to cover all the provided questions.
 - Do not sacrifice deep conversation on one question, just to “get through all the questions.”
 - Focus on honesty, depth, and a chance for everyone to share.
- Close your conversation with prayer, interceding for each other, and those you love. Express your gratitude for God’s goodness.

