

Living with Christ

2022-2023

Prayer Journal

This journal belongs to:

Why journal?

SPIRITUAL JOURNALING IS a form of prayer. Far beyond recapping our life's events, the exercise of journaling helps us to express our spiritual life. Our written words capture our spiritual experiences, thoughts, struggles, victories – and essentially form a prayer through which we communicate to God what lies in our innermost self.

The exercise of spiritual journaling does not require us to be experienced in such a practice, nor are there any specific guidelines. When we journal, we need not worry about style or formalities. Just as in our regular prayers, Jesus wishes us to speak freely, simply, and honestly what is in our heart.

This journal provides a guideline to your prayer exercise in the **Responding to the Word** section each day, where you will find a question that is directly connected to the readings of the day. If this question is helpful, feel free to use it, but do not feel constrained by it.

Spiritual journaling will essentially enlarge our vision and lead to a greater understanding of our spiritual journey.

Prayer for the Help of the Holy Spirit

Come, Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of your faithful
and kindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit
and they shall be created,
and you shall renew the face of the earth.
O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit,
did instruct the hearts of the faithful,
grant that by the same Holy Spirit
we may be truly wise
and ever enjoy his consolations.
Through the same Christ Our Lord.
Amen.

1st Sunday of Advent

DURING ADVENT, WE prepare for Christmas. Christmas is our encounter with God – or, more precisely, the coming of the Lord into the world so that *we* might encounter *him* – and Advent is the time during which we get ready for this encounter. But what is the “coming of the Lord”?

In today’s first reading and the psalm, the way to encounter God is to go to a particular place – specifically the Temple in Jerusalem. Here, we may be instructed in living according to the ways of God. In the Gospel, Jesus speaks of the Day of Judgment: a future, though not-too-distant, coming of the Lord. Jesus warns us to be ready for that day, but does not tell us how to prepare.

In the second reading, St. Paul gives us some idea of how we might get ready: by living honorably; by putting on the Lord Jesus Christ. This can only mean that we live not only according to what Jesus teaches, but also to *how* Jesus lives: without sin; prayerfully; prophetically; and in giving of ourselves lovingly to others, even our enemies, without limit.

In doing so, we will find that the “coming of the Lord” is a reality not only outside us, but also *within* each of us. Indeed, the Lord comes to each of us, into the very fabric of our being, again today in our celebration of the Eucharist.

Rev. Armand Mercier

People and Prayers to Remember this Week

Readings of the Day

Isaiah 2.1-5

Romans 13.11-14

Psalm 122

Matthew 24.37-44

Responding to the Word

Jesus reminds us that God often comes suddenly into the ordinary events of our lives. What must I do to be better prepared to encounter God?

2nd Sunday of Advent

TODAY WE MEET John the Baptist in the wilderness. Matthew's gospel introduces him without any explanation because no introduction was needed. He was a great figure in the Jewish world of his day, not only in Judea but right across the Mediterranean. In the Acts of the Apostles (19.1-7), Paul comes across a group of John's disciples in Ephesus in what today is Turkey.

In one way, John was a deeply traditional figure in Judaism; in another way, he was a radical, new figure. He dressed like the prophet Elijah and went out, like Elijah, into the wilderness, calling people back to the word of God. In several places in the gospels, people in fact compare him with Elijah. In another way,

he was very new because he called people to repent of their sins and be baptized as a sign of their repentance. The popularity of his challenging message, which drew great crowds out into the desert for baptism, shows that the time was ripe for the message of Jesus.

Jesus completed what John began: he offered a baptism in the Holy Spirit for the forgiveness of sins and the start of a new age of peace. In a sinful and dangerous world, we yearn for that gift of the Spirit promised by Isaiah in today's first reading, proclaimed by John in his ministry, and brought to fulfillment by Jesus.

Jennifer Cooper

People and Prayers to Remember this Week

Readings of the Day

Isaiah 11.1-10

Romans 15.4-9

Psalms 72

Matthew 3.1-12

Responding to the Word

The spirit-filled messiah will bring about greater justice and peace. How is the Holy Spirit drawing me to create better relationships in my life now?

Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

“FOR NOTHING WILL be impossible with God.” From the beginning of our creation story, we struggle to believe that God can make right what we perceive to have gone wrong. Adam and Eve hide in the garden, and throughout salvation history, we are tempted to despair and disbelief.

The second reading makes clear that nothing can get in the way of God’s loving pursuit of us. He was not thrown off by human sin, discouraged by our imperfection, or distanced from our fault; rather, “he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love.” We were made to belong to God’s family, an adoption of radical

love that casts out shame. So often, in the midst of our own challenges we buy into the lie that, even though God might work miracles out there somewhere, our brokenness or sin is just too big for God.

Where we might be tempted to see what could go wrong, Gabriel invites Mary to see – through Elizabeth’s joy – the hopeful possibility that this almighty God will find a way through all obstacles to possibility. She believes the promise that nothing will be impossible. May we believe likewise and let God work miracles in our impossible places.

Leah Perrault

People and Prayers to Remember this Week

Readings of the Day

Genesis 3.9-15, 20

Ephesians 1.3-6, 11-12

Psalm 98

Luke 1.26-38

Responding to the Word

**The angel tells Mary that nothing is impossible with God.
When has God made the impossible possible in my life?**

3rd Sunday of Advent

WHAT A DIFFERENCE between last Sunday's gospel and this Sunday's! Last week, it was a confident, assertive John the Baptist who exploded onto the scene preaching repentance, judgment, and the coming Messiah. Today, we see a much different John. Imprisoned and disheartened, John questions whether Jesus is actually the One whose coming he had foretold.

But who can blame him? After all, the Messiah whose coming John had promised was to chop down the unworthy and burn the "chaff." Instead, Jesus was healing the lame and cleansing the leper. He certainly wasn't the kind of Messiah John had expected.

And what about our own expectations? If we are hon-

est with ourselves, there may be times when Jesus doesn't fit into the nice, neat mold we have for him. Times, perhaps, when a prayer isn't answered the way we would like, or our idea about what is right and fair doesn't fit with gospel values. Then what do we do?

As the beginning of the new church year, Advent invites us to start over, to leave behind the familiar and venture into the unknown. Part of that can be letting go of pre-conceived notions about who Jesus is and how he should work in our lives, and opening ourselves up to new possibilities. With John the Baptist as our guide, let us begin today to discover anew the Jesus born into our world at Christmas.

Teresa Whalen Lux

People and Prayers to Remember this Week

Readings of the Day

Isaiah 35.1-6a, 10

James 5.7-10

Psalms 146

Matthew 11.2-11

Responding to the Word

Isaiah encourages us to be strong and fear not when God comes. What weakness and fear block my acceptance of God into my life?
