

Introduction To This Guide

These daily devotions are provided to encourage you to listen and reflect on how God is speaking to you during this Season of Lent. The question at the end of each day's contemplation is intended to foster further reflection and prayer throughout the day. In addition, space is provided for you to document your thoughts on how you hear God speaking to you at this time. May you be blessed and transformed through the Holy Spirit as you ponder God's word during this most holy of seasons. ++ *Provided by:* Community Missions Inc., 1570 Buffalo Ave., Niagara Falls, NY 14303, Phone: (716) 285-3403, www.communitymissions.org

Where Do I Begin?

Begin each day with the Prayer of Illumination to help, prepare your heart to hear God's word for you. Read "to be formed and transformed rather than to gather information...Read with a vulnerable heart. Expect to be blessed...Read as one awake, one waiting for the beloved. Read with reverence."ttt

Let us Pray a *Prayer of Illumination*:

All-Seeing One, above me, around me, within me —

guide my vision as I engage with your sacred words.

Look down upon me, look out from within me, look all around me.

See through my eyes, hear through my ears, feel through my heart.

God of Wisdom, touch me where I need to be touched;

and when my heart is touched, give me the grace to lay

down this Holy Book and ask significant questions:

Why has my heart been touched by you?

How am I to be changed through your touch?

All-Seeing One, I need to change, I need to look a little more like You.

May these sacred words change and transform me.

Then I can meet You face to face...when I shall be healed forever.

Your Word and the touch of your Spirit bring healing...

a healing that will last.

O Eye of God, look not away.

Create in me a clean heart, O God,

and put a new and right spirit within me. Amen.

Adapted from *A Tree Full of Angels* by Macrina Wiederkehr [As quoted in *A Guide To Prayer For All God's People*, Job & Shawchuck, The Upper Room]

WEDNESDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK

Day 15 • *Begin with Prayer of Illumination*

THE NEED FOR RE-FORMATION

Jeremiah 18:1-17 (edited)

The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: "Come, go down to the potter's house, and there I will let you hear my words." So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was working at his wheel. The vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as seemed good to him.

Then the word of the Lord came to me: Can I not do with you, O House of Israel, just as this potter has done? Says the LORD. Just like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand...At one moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, but if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will change my mind about the disaster that I intended to bring on it. And at another moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, but if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will change my mind about the good that I had intended to do to it. Now, therefore, say to the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: Thus says the LORD: Look, I am a potter shaping evil against you and devising a plan against you. Turn now...from your evil ways, and amend them.

But they say, "It is no use! We will follow our own plans, and each of us will act according to the stubbornness of our evil will." Therefore, thus says the Lord: Ask among the nations: Who has heard the like of this? The virgin Israel has done a most horrible thing...All who pass by it are horrified...like the wind from the east, I will scatter them before the enemy [they will see] my back, not my face, in the day of their calamity.

THE TENSION THAT MOLDS US

Paula Ripple, in her book *Growing Strong at Broken Places*,¹ recalls a discussion she had with a female potter. She sees that *tension* actually shapes the pot: "tension between the pressure applied from the outside and the pressure of the hand on the inside." And that "life, like this

pot, is the result of what happens on the outside and what is going on inside...”

We can hear the tension: God’s will to mold Israel God’s way, and Israel’s pressure from the surrounding community to conform to their way of life. And so the pot is *spoiled in the potter’s hands*. But Ripple’s potter claims that “the tension is God’s gift...that doesn’t permit us to escape its presence.” She claims that the tension creates a “gnawing discomfort” in us as we seek to be “faithful to who we are and who we can become.” We suffer consequences and cry for deliverance. And God, through loving mercy for ‘spoiled vessels and cracked pots’, remembers God’s covenant, reworks the plan, and delivers them once again. A loving parent does not fail to discipline his/her child, but always welcomes them home.

PRAYER

Lord God, thank you for your never giving up on us. And even when it creates a tension between us Lord, step in and make a way for us to be united once again. Amen

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

Name a time when you were reworked on the potter’s wheel.

Visit www.HopeForNiagara.org for more spiritual resources.

Lent 2022, Day 15

A Guide for Reflection and Prayer



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WEDNESDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK - Day 15 THE NEED FOR RE-FORMATION



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REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

Scripture Verses are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), HarpurCollins Publishers, 1989.

The choice of Daily Scripture texts are taken from Lent & Easter, Wisdom from Thomas Merton, Linguori Publications.

ⁱ Paula Ripple, Growing Strong at Broken Places, as quoted in A Guide to Prayer for All God’s People, Job & Shawchuck, The Upper Room, p. 255-6.

ⁱⁱ James M. Efird, in Jeremiah Prophet Under Siege, Judson Press, Valley Forge, 1979, p. 100.

ⁱⁱⁱ Charles de Foucauld, Meditations of a Hermit, as quoted in A Guide to Prayer for All God’s People, Job & Shawchuck, The Upper Room, p. 111.

ⁱ Richard J. Foster, Prayer, HarperCollins Publishers, 1992., p. 2-3

ⁱⁱ Henri J. M. Nouwen, Beloved: Henri Nouwen in Conversation, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2007. p. 46,48,18.

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