

Lent 2024: Growing into an Easter Morning

Words for these Days

As you prepare for Lent and Easter this year let me offer a word, a word for each of these weeks. Place the word for the week before you. Keep it in your thoughts. I have offered some of my thoughts related to the word of the week. Write down your thoughts. Return to it as you sit resting, or waiting, or involved in an activity. Let this word become a companion. Repeat the blessing as a guide for your day. Allow these words to grow into a new meaning. And as they grow, may you grow into an Easter Morning that is fresh and new.

Terry Ewing
Vice President of Advancement

Ash Wednesday, February 14

Receive: When did I become so dried out and stiff? When did I close my eyes, not seeing? When did I fill my ears with sounds of regret and despair? When did refusal become my habit and denial my closest companion? Here is my chance. Here once more, I can open my arms, open myself to receive what is beautiful, complete, loving and holy. Never too old or too young. Once more, I have a chance.

God of Mercy, may I receive the Gift and the new life coming before me now.



Receive

February 18–24

Follow: Life experience can be a gift, even an advantage. It can also throw a global-size wet blanket on anything burning with a new fire and a new direction. “I’ve been around,” I say. “I’ve seen this before,” I say. Within my drowning heart, I wish, I long, even yearn for my spirit to sit in the pilot’s seat once more and to leap toward the skies! Here, now this One passes by on Mercy’s March. I can do nothing, again. Or... I can follow.

Gentle Lord, may my aching spirit guide my feet to walk on this path, free to follow.

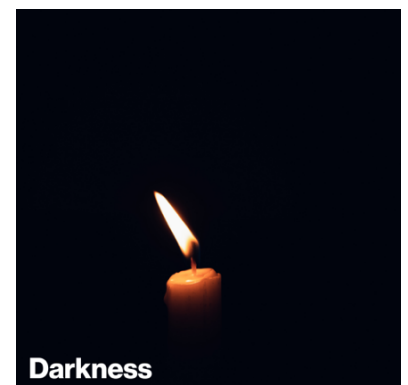


Follow

February 25–March 2

Darkness: These things draw me into the corners of each day: terrorism, the anger epidemic, unbridled racism, increasing poverty, the everyday face of the homeless, aging, loss of friends and family, the twins of fear and anger aimed at anyone different, the demise of respect, and where all this ends. These things hang upon my day. These things wait in the back frightening and real. What is faith in a place so dark? Where can it be found? When will Good News be revealed? My faith calls upon me to search and in the searching my faith steps forward. My faith says Love will find a way. My faith lights the candle one more time that burns, without fear, in my world and in my life.

Most Loving God, may the darkness fade, may my heartbeat with new hope and may Love walk among us again.



Darkness

March 3–9

Broken: Though I may pretend these weeks are like every other week, I know these weeks are sacred. I know this because the air is filled with the blooms of glory, the fragrance of forgiveness and all shades of compassion. I know these weeks are sacred because I try so very hard to look away, to see it happening somewhere else, to someone else. What is broken finds it difficult to see what is whole. This is a world, its own world, in which nothing touches and nothing is touched. Now a hand reaches out, to touch. Something complete and whole. Something sacred.

Holy Companion, may I see another way that brings all the scattered pieces together, again.



March 10–16

Good News: Just one word, or a sight I have never noticed, or even the warming light of the sun can change a day. In a moment, what seemed without life, without joy, or a dark obstacle before me, or even the sly trickster of doubt whispering in my head – all these are changed – Gone! So, it can be different. I am not strapped with regret or chained to past mistakes. Looking up, I see the face of Love. Looking up, I see it can be different. Looking up, I see Good News.

Dear God, may I see the beaming light of Love that changes each day. May I embrace your Good News.



March 17–23

Silence: Listen. Hold your breath. Listen. There is a silence of great dread and anxious arrival. There is a silence that scares us, and we seek to fill it with any sound. Yet, there is a silence surrounding what cannot be explained. There is a silence of frozen anticipation. A silence rising inside. A silence opening what is closed. A silence bearing hints of knowledge. A silence slowly taking form. A silence causing heads to bow, still and reverent, waiting for what must be sacred, even holy – it must be sacred! We wait in silence. Here we wait, between the day of stark Good News and the day of Sacred New Creation. Frozen anticipation.

Holy God, may I sit in the silence of my life's sanctuary, my heart filled with hope. May I be faithful now.



March 24–30

Beginning: It is easy to believe the story is over, that there is nothing and nowhere else to go, that each day is swallowed by night, the chorus of fears, misgivings and doubts echo in my head and their voices are loud, more than any other, more than my own. Begin again. No turning away. Only turning toward the open gates, open for this One, open for me. The arrival of the Promise, this One, who has come. It is a week of Alleluia-Beginnings! *Most Loving God, may my head, my heart and my life greet the One who comes.*



Beginning

Easter Sunday, March 31

Rise: This day has come. New again, once more new. Repeated often in my life but now, this year, it comes as I have never known before. This day has come! There is one word, one hope, upon my lips. One word formed by the One who recreates Life, opens Life, fills each day of living with life. One word, the only word I can speak on this day. One word in a magnificent embrace swooping upon my life: Rise! No longer held down by the old stories. No longer tied up in knots of regret. No longer robbing myself of joy and happiness by looking back to dirty old days. No longer nailed to my greatest pain or humbling loss. Rise! I can turn my face to what brims with light! I can pick up myself, again and again! I can leave it all behind as I enter this day. Rise! I can be who I was always intended to be. I can find Life, hold it close, my dear Life. Rise!



Rise

Gracious God, may I know your Peace, your loving Restoration, and your Unconditional Love. May I rise, new. This is my prayer, in the name of the One who found us all, on this day. Alleluia Amen!