

LENT DEVOTIONAL



LENT PROGRAM

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LENTEN DEVOTIONAL THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2024

SCRIPTURE

PSALM 102

- 1 Hear my prayer, O LORD;
let my cry come to you.
- 2 Do not hide your face from me
in the day of my distress.
Incline your ear to me;
answer me speedily in the day when I call.
- 3 For my days pass away like smoke,
and my bones burn like a furnace.
- 4 My heart is stricken and withered like grass;
I am too wasted to eat my bread.
- 5 Because of my loud groaning
my bones cling to my skin.

6 I am like an owl of the wilderness,
 like a little owl of the waste places.
 7 I lie awake;
 I am like a lonely bird on the housetop.
 8 All day long my enemies taunt me;
 those who deride me use my name for a curse.
 9 For I eat ashes like bread,
 and mingle tears with my drink,
 10 because of your indignation and anger;
 for you have lifted me up and thrown me aside.
 11 My days are like an evening shadow;
 I wither away like grass.
 12 But you, O LORD, are enthroned forever;
 your name endures to all generations.
 13 You will rise up and have compassion on Zion,
 for it is time to favor it;
 the appointed time has come.
 14 For your servants hold its stones dear,
 and have pity on its dust.
 15 The nations will fear the name of the LORD,
 and all the kings of the earth your glory.
 16 For the LORD will build up Zion;
 he will appear in his glory.
 17 He will regard the prayer of the destitute,
 and will not despise their prayer.
 18 Let this be recorded for a generation to come,
 so that a people yet unborn may praise the LORD:
 19 that he looked down from his holy height,
 from heaven the LORD looked at the earth,
 20 to hear the groans of the prisoners,
 to set free those who were doomed to die;
 21 so that the name of the LORD may be declared in Zion,
 and his praise in Jerusalem,
 22 when peoples gather together,
 and kingdoms, to worship the LORD.
 23 He has broken my strength in midcourse;
 he has shortened my days.
 24 "O my God," I say, "do not take me away
 at the mid-point of my life,
 you whose years endure
 throughout all generations."
 25 Long ago you laid the foundation of the earth,
 and the heavens are the work of your hands.
 26 They will perish, but you endure;
 they will all wear out like a garment.
 You change them like clothing, and they pass away;
 27 but you are the same, and your years have no end.
 28 The children of your servants shall live secure;
 their offspring shall be established in your presence.

DEVOTION

The Rev. Andrew Wirt '10

Interesting how Lent 2024 starts: Ash Wednesday was Valentine's Day this year. Today I find myself still thinking about that unusual combination. The celebration, thrill, and excitement of romantic love mixed with the humility of the ash meant to remind us of our mortality.

But, then again, that seems like a great example of the tension of Lent. Every Sunday is a celebration of the resurrection, a mini-Easter. In Lent that is mixed with the themes of humility, repentance, preparation for the Easter that is to come.

The psalms, as they so often do, help us to express these difficult, conflicting emotions. Many of the psalms help us with our praises:

“The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?” (Ps 27:1)

“Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, O Zion!” (Ps 147:14)

“The LORD has done great things for us, and we rejoiced.” (Ps 126:3)

Many of the psalms help us express our frustrations, worries, sorrow, and laments:

“My heart is stricken and withered like grass; I am too wasted to eat my bread.” (Ps 102:4)

Whatever emotions we may be feeling this Lent, the psalms remind us that we are not alone. Others have walked this path before us. Their poetic words give voice to the feelings we struggle to name. And we can be reassured that in the celebration, the thrill, the excitement; and in the humility, the repentance, the preparation; and even in the frustrations, worries, sorrow, and laments, the Lord is there with us as well.

“. . . that he looked down from his holy height, from heaven the LORD looked at the earth.” (Ps 102:19)

PRAYER

Lord, look down from your holy height, and see us here on the earth. Walk with us this Lent. Rejoice with us. Cry with us. Guide us and prepare us for the Easter that is to come. Amen.

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