



Meditations for the 40 Days: 2020

The readings from cycle A primarily follow the Common Lectionary Sunday readings for the Forty Days and Easter season. They give us a scriptural orientation to the new life in Christ. We will use the Sunday gospel for Sunday, and other Sunday readings for Monday, Wednesday and Friday. On Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, we will use readings that are more orientated to a personal progression through the 40 Days.

OPENING HALF-WEEK:

The initial half-week of the 40 Days is a period to consider what it means to go through a lengthy season of seeking the Lord and to prepare to do it well.

Wed. 2/26 | Jl. 2:12-18

A time of seeking the Lord is a time of turning to him, of repentance, and of humbling ourselves before God.

Thu. 2/27 | Ac. 1:3-5

The period from the resurrection to the ascension was forty days of “seeking” the Lord and of being taught by him, a time that resulted in the blessing of the descent of the Spirit.

Fri. 2/28 | Mt. 6:1-6, 16-18

A time of seeking the Lord is a time of added prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

Sat. 2/29 | Lk. 5:29-32

The Lord comes to those who are truly prepared.

WEEK ONE:

The first week focuses on the fallen state of the human race, and on humility as the way to cooperate with God's redemption.

Sun 3/1 | Mt. 4:1-11

Jesus sought God his Father for forty days in the wilderness in preparation for his ministry, and his faith and obedience were strengthened by testing.

Mon. 3/2 | Gen. 2:7-9, 15-17; 3:1-7

God created the human race for the relationship of sonship, sharing in the rule of all creation, but the human race fell and lives outside of his purpose. The temptation which Adam succumbed to Christ overcame.

Tue. 3/3 | Jas. 4:6-10

God's fundamental disposition is to give grace, to restore relationship, but in order to renew our relationship with him we need to choose the way of humility and submission expressed in repentance.

Wed. 3/4 | Gen. 9:8-17

God's covenant with Noah expresses God's commitment to the human race not to abandon it, regardless of how much evil it may exhibit.

Thu. 3/5 | 2 Chr. 7:12-16

The humility and repentance of God's people is the path to restoration and greater blessing, because God is committed to those he has consecrated (the Christian people are now his Temple).

Fri. 3/6 | Rom. 5:12-21

The two Adams: the obedience of Christ reverses the disobedience of Adam, and brings life.

Sat. 3/7 | Ps. 130:3-4, 7-8

If the Lord were not to forgive, he would not have a people to honor him; we can trust in his abundant mercy.

WEEK TWO:

The second week focuses on God's promise of restoration and on his determination to have a people that walk in his ways.

Sun. 3/8 | Mt. 17:1-9

The transfiguration gave Christ's disciples a vision of his glory and of who they were following, so that they might be prepared for what was to come.

Mon. 3/9 | Gen. 12:1-9

The gospel is preached to Abraham and the promise of an inheritance is given.

Tue. 3/10 | Lk. 6:32-36

The character of God is an encouragement to our hope, but also a call to be like him so that we might live now the life of the age to come.

Wed. 3/11 | Gen. 22:1-18

The binding of Isaac is the mysterious promise of the lamb that God would provide, as well as an example of the consecration of the man of faith.

Thu. 3/12 | Deut. 26:16-19

The call to be a holy people is a call to be an obedient people.

Fri. 3/13 | 2 Tim. 1:8-10

The fulfillment of the promise does not rest on the capacity of the human race, but on God's purpose and grace, and on the work of Christ.

Sat. 3/14 | Heb. 10:35-39

The faith we are called to is a faith that can endure and persevere in the face of difficulty, a faith that remembers the glory of the transfigured Christ.

WEEK THREE:

The third week focuses on the new life that comes in Christ to those who have turned to him, and on our seeking him as a renewal of that conversion which brings life.

Sun. 3/15 | Jn. 4:5-42

The Lord brings the gift of God, enlightenment, and worship in Spirit and in truth to those who receive him.

Mon. 3/16 | Ex. 17:3-7

The rock is Christ (1 Cor. 10:4), the water is the gift of the Spirit, and the new life is a sign that God is with us and will bring us where he wishes us to be.

Tue. 3/17 | Ps. 43:1-4

A prayer to the Lord that he will draw us to himself.

Wed. 3/18 | Ex. 3:1-15

The Lord comes down himself to save his people, manifesting his presence and renewing his covenant.

Thu. 3/19 | Ps. 42:1-2

The desire for God is something that brings us to him.

Fri. 3/20 | Rom. 5:1-8

The Lord unites us to himself through the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit, and as we go through difficulties, he roots us deeper in himself.

Sat. 3/21 | Ps. 36:7-8

In the presence of the Lord, we are filled with his goodness.

WEEK FOUR:

The fourth week continues to focus on the new life in Christ that comes through his anointing and enlightening of us, and on our appreciation of the goodness of that life.

Sun. 3/22 | Jn. 9:10-41

Christ anoints the blind so that they can truly see; they receive light from being joined to the anointed one, who is the light of the world.

Mon. 3/23 | 1 Sam. 16:1-13

The Lord chooses us and anoints us with his Spirit so that we might have life in him.

Tue. 3/24 | Ps. 26:6-8

To those who can enter, the place of God's presence is very beautiful.

Wed. 3/25 | Eph. 2:4-10

The Lord gives us life through sharing with us what comes through his death and resurrection, so that we might live the life he has created us for.

Thu. 3/26 | 2 Cor. 5:1-8

Here we live the life of the Spirit, the pledge of the life for which we long.

Fri. 3/27 | Eph. 5:8-14

The new life and light leads to a new way of living.

Sat. 3/28 | 2 Cor. 4:16-18

The life we live here is a life that looks to the age to come.

WEEK FIVE:

The fifth week looks both to the new life given to us by the resurrection power of Christ and the outpouring of the Spirit, and to the way we walk as imitators of Christ, putting to death the old human being so that we might live the new life.

Sun. 3/29 | Jn. 11:1-45

Christ himself is the resurrection and the life; those who unite themselves to him through faith receive resurrection life from him.

Mon. 3/30 | Ez. 37:1-14

The Spirit of God restores God's people, individually and corporately, and provides life in the land of the living.

Tue. 3/31 | 1 Pet. 5:6-11

The new life in the Spirit involves suffering and humility, but leads to restoration and exaltation.

Wed. 4/1 | Jer. 31:31-34

The new life in the Lord is based upon a new covenant relationship in which he changes us internally.

Thu. 4/2 | Gal. 5:22-26

The new life is a new way of living, the fruit of the Spirit, but the fruit can only mature through a "crucifying" of the flesh, that is, by refusing to live according to the desires of the old human being in us.

Fri. 4/3 | Rom. 8:7-14

We are in the Spirit because the Spirit has been given to us, and so we can count on eternal life, but we need to "put to death" the deeds that the old human being wants to do.

Sat. 4/4 | Jn. 12:20-33

The way to the new life is through death to the old life, and through following the Lord who died for us.

WEEK SIX – HOLY WEEK:

The sixth week is Holy Week, the week for meditating on the suffering and death of the Lord.

Sun. 4/5 | Phil. 2:3-11

The Lord humbled himself that he might be exalted, and he did so to serve us.

Mon. 4/6 | Eph. 5:2

The Lord gave himself for us as a sacrifice.

Tue. 4/7 | Heb. 2:9, 14-15

He tasted death for us so that we might be freed from the bondage of mortality.

Wed. 4/8 | 1 Jn. 2:1-2

Christ's death was the propitiatory or atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

Thu. 4/9 | 1 Pet. 1:18-20

The blood of the true Passover lamb was the payment for our redemption.

Holy Thursday - Holy Saturday: the passion narrative from Matthew (Matt. 26-27)