

## **PALM SUNDAY, 2 APRIL HOLY WEEK**

*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?* Ps 21: 8-9,17-20,23-24  
“Sometimes we have to suffer pain and bereavement.”

## **MONDAY 3 APRIL**

*He does not cry or shout aloud.* Is 42:1-7  
“In our busy stressful world we have to consciously find silence.”

## **TUESDAY 4 APRIL**

*My lips will tell of your help.* Ps 70: 1-6, 15, 17 r.15  
“We sat by the fire and shared laughter and companionship.”

## **WEDNESDAY 5 APRIL**

*I did not cover my face against insult and spittle.* Is 50:4-9  
“Instead of rehearsing hurts over and over, release them.”

## **HOLY THURSDAY 6 APRIL**

*If I, then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you should wash each other's feet.* Jn 13: 1-15  
“We can choose to put on love. If it were a feeling, we couldn't control or command it, but it's not a feeling – it's a choice.”

## **GOOD FRIDAY 7 APRIL**

*After Jesus had taken the vinegar he said, “It is accomplished,” and bowing his head he gave up his spirit.* Jn 18: 1-19.42  
“God's love for us and the kind of love we are to have for him and for others is *agape* – unconditional, giving, sacrificial love.”

## **HOLY SATURDAY 8 APRIL**

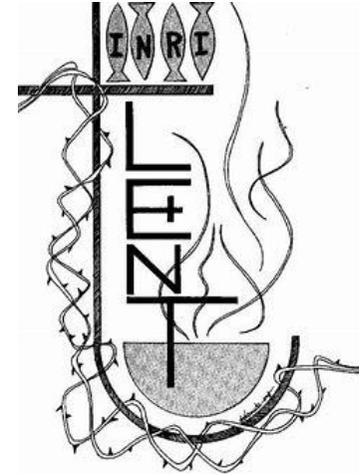
“What does it mean to think loving thoughts? It means to begin to focus on other people's needs, hurts, problems, desires and goals, not just our own.”

## **EASTER SUNDAY 9 APRIL**

*We are witness: that all who believe in Jesus will have their sins forgiven through his name.* Acts 10: 34, 37-43  
“We are called to live out our baptismal anointing: to be a light in the world, to bring joy to others through the message we proclaim.”

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# A JOURNEY FROM LENT TO EASTER 2023



*“In life's journey, as in every journey,  
what really matters is not to lose sight of the goal.*

*We should ask ourselves:  
On the journey of life, do I seek the way forward?*

*Return to me, says the Lord.  
To me.*

*The Lord is the goal of our journey in this world.  
The direction must lead to him.”*

**Pope Francis, Homily March 2019**

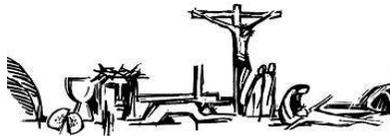
Lent is an opportunity to prepare, to take time out and quieten ourselves, to listen to God, to examine our lives and reassess our priorities.

For Lent 2021 and 2022 I shared daily readings based on the writings of my elder daughter Annie, a scripture scholar, teacher and evangelist who died of natural causes in June 2020. This year I'm using Annie's words once again as an aid to prayer and reflection.

**NOTE:** Scripture verses are from the daily readings of the Liturgy Office for England and Wales 2023, the reflections from Annie's writings.

*"In this time of prayer, as we searched in the silence, we put aside all distractions to seek God's face."*

**Annie O'Connor, Holy Island Retreat**



#### **ASH WEDNESDAY 22 FEBRUARY**

*Come back to me with all your heart ... turn to the Lord your God again, for he is all tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in graciousness, and ready to relent." Joel 2:12-18*  
*"The journey with the Lord is a journey into love."*

#### **THURSDAY 23 FEBRUARY**

*Anyone who loses his life for my sake will save it. Lk 9:22-25*  
*"You have made us for yourself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they find rest in you."*

#### **FRIDAY 24 FEBRUARY**

*A humbled, contrite heart, O God, you will not spurn. Ps 50:3-6. 18-19*  
*"Before entering a place of prayer, a room or before beginning the day pause at the threshold for the length of an 'Our Father' and become aware of God gazing on you in love"*

#### **SATURDAY 25 FEBRUARY**

*Show me, Lord, your way so that I may walk in your truth. Ps 85: 1-6*  
*"Lord, may your spirit reveal to me the right path and give me the strength, consolation and determination to walk it."*

#### **SUNDAY 26 MARCH LENT 5**

*With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption . Ps 129*  
*"To experience God's presence is to experience the light in God's shining face."*

#### **MONDAY 27 MARCH**

*If there is one of you who has not sinned, let him be the first to throw a stone at her. Jn 8:1-11*  
*"It's easy to love people who are kind and lovely, but if God is going to teach us to love, he will bring some hard-to-love people into our lives."*

#### **TUESDAY 28 MARCH 28**

*O Lord, listen to my prayer and let my cry for help reach you. Ps 101:2-3, 16-21*  
*"The sharp points on my journey are the growth points."*

#### **WEDNESDAY 29 MARCH**

*He has sent his angel to rescue his servants. Dan 3:14-20, 24-25, 28*  
*"The message of the angels is nothing less than the infinite God of love come down, God-with-us, reconciliation, new life."*

#### **THURSDAY 30 MARCH**

*The Lord remembers his covenant forever. Ps 104: 4-9*  
*"Prayer is just being with God, being before God, trying just to sit with God. It's about the journey from the head to the heart."*

#### **FRIDAY 31 MARCH**

*In my anguish I called to the Lord and he heard my voice. Ps 17: 2-7*  
*"So often we hurry through life, rushing from one task to the next, barely pausing to reflect or listen to the voice of the Lord."*

#### **SATURDAY 1 APRIL**

*I will make them into one nation. Ezek 37:21-28*  
*"Our mission to serve cannot be restricted in terms of nationality, social group or religious affiliation."*



#### **SUNDAY 19 MARCH LENT 4**

*I am the light of the world, says the Lord; anyone who believes in me will have the light of life.* Gospel Accl. John 8:12

“Without God, there is no life, no movement, no change.”

#### **MONDAY 20 MARCH**

*No more will the sound of weeping or the sound of cries be heard.*

Is 65:17-21

“Sometimes the days are all uphill - sometimes I can't see round the next corner, but I have to trust that the path is still there.”

#### **TUESDAY 21 MARCH**

*The man was cured at once.* John 5:1-3, 5-16

“Don't just live the length of life: live the breadth of it as well.”

#### **WEDNESDAY 22 MARCH**

*The Lord is kind and full of compassion.* Ps 144:8-9, 13-14, 17-18

“Kindness is love in action – a practical expression of love. It is visible and active.”

#### **THURSDAY 23 MARCH**

*O Lord, remember me out of the love you have for your people.*

Ps 105: 19-23 r.4

“Giving ourselves to others in love takes courage. We can only do this knowing that we possess God's indestructible love.”

#### **FRIDAY 24 MARCH**

*The Lord is close to the broken-hearted* Ps 33: 16, 18-21, 23

“When someone is grieving, just being there is an expression of kindness – we don't need to know what to say.”

#### **SATURDAY 25 MARCH**

*Lord God, I take refuge in you* Ps 7: 2-3, 9-12

“Remember to seek moments of peace and tranquility.”

#### **SUNDAY 26 FEBRUARY LENT 1**

*Give me again the joy of your help, with a spirit of fervour sustain me.*

*O Lord, open my lips and my mouth shall declare your praise.*

Ps 50:3-6, 12-14, 17

“Ask the Holy Spirit to help you be invaded by God's love so that you can give it to others.”

#### **MONDAY 27 FEBRUARY**

*Your words are spirit, Lord, and they are life.* Ps 18: 8-10,15 r. Jn 6:64

“God speaks in all sorts of ways – through scripture, through nature, through other people. However, unless we slow down and listen, we miss his promptings and his voice.”

#### **TUESDAY 28 FEBRUARY**

*The Lord rescues the just in all their distress.* Ps 33: 4-7, 16-19

“Kindness always starts with noticing the needs of others. Everyone needs kindness – everyone is hurting somewhere.”

#### **WEDNESDAY 1 MARCH**

*Now, now — it is the Lord who speaks — come back to me with all your heart, for I am all tenderness and compassion.* Joel 2:12-13

“Don't wait to show a kindness. Do it while you have the opportunity. Do it now.”

#### **THURSDAY 2 MARCH**

*On the day I called, you answered me, O Lord.* Ps 137: 1-3, 7-8

“In telling our own stories we were able to invite God into our lives anew and to recognise his powerful presence among us.”

#### **FRIDAY 3 MARCH**

*Go and be reconciled with your brother first.* Mt 5: 20-26

“It is impossible to love anyone fully and at the same time to resent someone else. You cannot give total love when your heart is divided.”

#### **SATURDAY 4 MARCH**

*They are happy who follow God's law!* Ps 118

“We are called as the people of God to serve the communities in whose lives we share and to be people of vision.”

### **SUNDAY 5 MARCH LENT 2**

*I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living. Ps 115:10. 15-19*

“By slowing down, and being more present to each moment, all sorts of lessons are learned. For me, it is an invitation to a whole way of being – one that recognises that God is not ‘out there’ to be sought, but already ‘in here’ to be found.”

### **MONDAY 6 MARCH**

*Be compassionate just as your Father is compassionate. Lk 6: 36-38*

“Sometimes a touch on the shoulder, a tear, a hug, a grasp of the hand is all a hurting person needs.”

### **TUESDAY 7 MARCH**

*Learn to do good, search for justice. Isaiah 1:10, 16-20*

“The letter of St. James teaches us that genuine faith must be expressed in action. We must use our riches to serve others.”

### **WEDNESDAY 8 MARCH**

*They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified; and on the third day he will be raised up again. Mt 20: 17-28*

“I thought about the things in my backpack that I didn’t really need for the journey that were weighing me down and restricting my movement. I thought about things in my life that need to move. I thought about things in my heart that need to move.”

### **THURSDAY 9 MARCH**

*Blessed are those who, with a noble and generous heart, take the word of God to themselves and yield a harvest through their perseverance. Lk 8:15*

“I believe that true evangelisation is born of love and desire: a love for people and a desire that everyone on earth come to know the love of Christ and the blessings of living in his kingdom.”

### **FRIDAY 10 MARCH**

*Remember the wonders the Lord has done. Ps 104:16-21*

“When the going is heavy and all uphill, God sends me his breeze; when the going is easy, he warms me with his sun.”

### **SATURDAY 11 MARCH**

*The Lord is compassion and love. Ps 102: 1-4, 6-8, 11*

“The best use of life is love; the best expression of love is time; the best time to love is now.”

### **SUNDAY 12 MARCH LENT 3**

*The love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given us. Rom 5:1-2, 5-8*

“Before we can love others, we must feel and understand how deeply God loves us. We need to feel God’s love – unloved people are unloving people.”

### **MONDAY 13 MARCH**

*My soul is thirsting for the Lord, the Lord of my life. When shall*

*I see the face of God? Ps 41: 2-3, 42: 3-4*

“As we sought the face of the Lord we were filled with light, joy, peace and love.”

### **TUESDAY, MARCH 14**

*Your Father will not forgive you unless you each forgive your brother from your heart. Mt 18: 21-35*

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you be invaded by God’s love so that you can give it to others.

### **WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH**

*O praise the Lord, Jerusalem! Ps 147: 12-13, 15-16*

“We are all called to speak, live and act in ways that bring the good news of God-with-us to those we meet.”

### **THURSDAY 16 MARCH**

*Anyone who is not with me is against me. Lk 11: 14-23*

“Sometimes my path is blocked and I cannot go the way I choose.”

### **FRIDAY 17 MARCH**

*Repent, says the Lord, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.*

*Mk 12:28-34*

“Walking long distances forces me to slow down. It helps me to be still and to practice being fully present to each particular moment.”

*What I want is love, not sacrifice. Hos 5:15 - 6:6*

“We need to build people up rather than tear them down.”