

“My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.”

Psalm 73.26



THE FIRE AND THE ROSE ARE ONE

Makoto Fujimura



THE CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

LENTEN DEVOTIONAL | 2020

LENT

Times and seasons. Time moves us along from season to season. Cold gives way to warmth, dark to light, and life reemerges. And we mark these movements with moods and memories, rehearsed again each year.

In the Church year, it is the events of the good news that orient our times. Advent: the King's arrival. Christmas: the King's incarnation. Epiphany: the King's self-revelation to the nations. Lent: the King's road to the cross. Easter: the King's victory. Pentecost: the King's gospel proclaimed with power. In these seasons of mourning and celebration, of repentance and newness, our lives take shape around the reality of Christ.

The place of Lent. Forty years Israel wandered in the wilderness. Forty days Nineveh repented in sackcloth and ashes. Forty days Christ was tempted in the desert. And with this biblical echo of forty ringing seasons of trial in their ears, the early Christians were moved to incorporate into their walk a forty-day focus on Christ's road to the cross. Because at the heart of Christ's life was death: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies..." But at the heart of his death was also life: "But if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24). And his heart becomes our heart, his death our death: "Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also" (John 12.25-26).

The practice of Lent. And so in Lent, we train ourselves to die a good death in order to live the only good Life. We **fast**, even from what is good (foods, luxuries, innocent practices, etc.), to teach our hearts to focus anew on the One who is best. We **mourn our sin**, asking the Lord to reveal with fresh light our dark habits and apathies so that his life might flow unhindered in and through us. All of this we do on the **foundation of his grace** and always **with Easter in mind**. Our fasting and mourning are not to twist God's arm into extending us favor but to bend our hearts and bodies to better receive his favor. And so fasting always gives way to feasting, mourning to joy, death to resurrection. And Sundays, the day of our Lord, are never counted in the forty days of fasting; our Lenten fast is suspended on Sundays, where we always feast the resurrection.

About this guide. This guide begins each new week of the Lenten season (starting with Ash Wednesday and ending with the events of Holy Week) with a short meditation on a theme derived from a collect from that week (a "COL-lect being a collecting of the prayers of the people into one voice). The days of the Lenten season are numbered and a suggested reading (drawn from NT Wright's Lent for Everyone: Matthew) accompanies each day. The artwork associated with each week is from the various works of Makoto Fujimura.

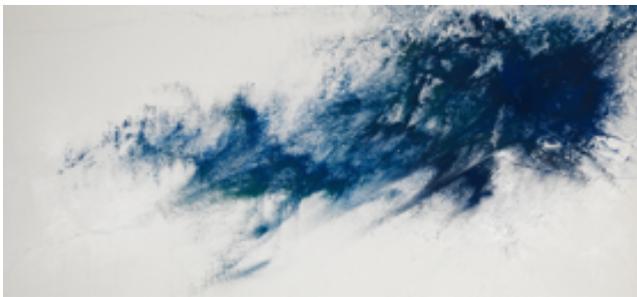
Set aside time each day to soak in the readings. Let the collect of the week shape your own daily prayers, and let the meditation focus your Lenten fasting. May God bless you with a fruitful Lent as you walk the pilgrim way of the cross toward the joys of Easter resurrection.

ASH WEDNESDAY: DUSTY

Sweaty. Smelly. Animal. Earth-stuff. Seemingly the opposite of exalted (and exaltable). But God is (and always has been) the lifter of low things (1 Corinthians 1.28). So it is no wonder, and yet the wonder of wonders, that God's design is (and always has been) to bring dust to glory. "[W]hat is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? Yet you have...crowned him with glory and honor" (Psalm 8.4-5).

But dusty ashes pressed into our dusty foreheads remind us that we have all careened off the path to glory. "[F]or all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3.23). In sin, dust to glory becomes dust back to dust (Genesis 3:19)—our glorious purpose undone by rebellion.

But those dusty ashes on our foreheads trace a dusty Man's cross-shaped road through death to resurrection glory. And now, sin cannot keep our dusty lives down if we too will sink with Christ down into death and travel the glorious, life-giving way of the cross.



"Walking on Water - Azurite" Makoto Fujimura

COLLECT FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Ash Wednesday	Feb 26th	Luke 1:1-38	Day 1
Thursday	Feb 27th	Luke 1:39-80	Day 2
Friday	Feb 28th	Luke 2:1-21	Day 3
Saturday	Feb 29th	Luke 2:22-52	Day 4

THE FIRST WEEK IN LENT: TEMPTED

Each of us clings to a ring of keys—keys we’ve picked up over the years, inherited from our ancestors, or fashioned for ourselves. Each one is meticulously labeled to match a desire on the other side of a door: image-protection, truth-adjustment, sexual-relief, status-equalizer, righteous-wrath, innocent-escape, and holy-separation. And when desire stirs, we turn the key as time and habit have trained us; and we justify each entry.

But once through the door, we (re)discover darker names that expose the deceptive labels of our keys: idolatry, lying, sexual immorality, envy, rage, drunkenness, and divisiveness. “[E]ach person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death” (James 1.14-15). The keys promise a way to life, but on the other side of the door is always and only death.

Meanwhile, there stands an open Door of Life, and he says, “Take up your cross and follow me. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it” (Mark 8.34; 1 Corinthians 10.13).



“ISCP Performance” Makoto Fujimura

COLLECT FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan: Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations; and, as you know the weaknesses of each of us, let each one find you mighty to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

First Sunday	March 1	Psalm 32	Feast Day
Monday	March 2	Luke 3	Day 5
Tuesday	March 3	Luke 4	Day 6
Wednesday	March 4	Luke 5	Day 7
Thursday	March 5	Luke 6:1-23	Day 8
Friday	March 6	Luke 6:24-49	Day 9
Saturday	March 7	Luke 7:1-35	Day 10

THE SECOND WEEK IN LENT: ASTRAY

Come home, come home, for your eyes are sore
With the glare of the noonday sun,
And nothing looks as it did before,
And the best of the day is done.

You have played your match, and ridden your race,
You have fought in your fight—and lost;
And life has set its claws in your face,
And you know what the scratches cost.

Out there the world is cruel and loud,
It strikes at the beaten man;
Come out of the press of the stranger crowd
To the place where your life began...

- Edith Nesbit, from
"The Prodigal Son"



"Luke - Prodigal God" Makoto Fujimura

COLLECT FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy: Be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word, Jesus Christ your Son; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Second Sunday	March 8	Psalm 121	Feast Day
Monday	March 9	Luke 7:36-50	Day 11
Tuesday	March 10	Luke 8:1-39	Day 12
Wednesday	March 11	Luke 8:40-56	Day 13
Thursday	March 12	Luke 9:1-36	Day 14
Friday	March 13	Luke 9:37-62	Day 15
Saturday	March 14	Luke 10	Day 16

THE THIRD WEEK IN LENT: POWERLESS



"Between Two Waves and the Sea"
Makoto Fujimura

In dreams the will to fight back is always present. The foe arises—this-worldly or other-worldly, a recognizable form from conscious life or the fleshly incarnation of some subconscious fear. But our hands, our feet do not respond. Some invisible force renders them lifeless to punch, to kick. Powerless.

Sin promises an ecstatic dream, but like a dream it removes our power. The dream turns waking nightmare as we are stripped of self-mastery and mastered by another. "[S]in... deceived me and...killed me. I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out." (Romans 7.11, 18). Powerless.

But "the hour has come for you to wake from sleep... The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light...put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires" (Romans 13.11-14). Empowered by Christ.

COLLECT FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Third Sunday	March 15	Psalm 95	Feast Day
Monday	March 16	Luke 11:1-32	Day 17
Tuesday	March 17	Luke 11:33-54	Day 18
Wednesday	March 18	Luke 12:1-34	Day 19
Thursday	March 19	Luke 12:35-59	Day 20
Friday	March 20	Luke 13	Day 21
Saturday	March 21	Luke 14	Day 22

THE FOURTH WEEK IN LENT: HUNGRY

Love bade me welcome. Yet my soul drew back
Guilty of dust and sin

But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning,
If I lacked any thing.

A guest, I answered, worthy to be here:
Love said, You shall be he.

I the unkind, ungrateful? Ah my dear,
I cannot look on thee.

Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
Who made the eyes but I?

Truth Lord, but I have marred them: let my shame
Go where it doth deserve.

And know you not, says Love, who bore the blame?
My dear, then I will serve.

You must sit down, says Love, and taste my meat:
So I did sit and eat.

- George Herbert, "Love III"



"Tree Grace" Makoto Fujimura

COLLECT FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Fourth Sunday	March 22	Psalm 23	Feast Day
Monday	March 23	Luke 15	Day 23
Tuesday	March 24	Luke 16	Day 24
Wednesday	March 25	Luke 17	Day 25
Thursday	March 26	Luke 18:1-30	Day 26
Friday	March 27	Luke 18:31-43	Day 27
Saturday	March 28	Luke 19:1-27	Day 28

THE FIFTH WEEK IN LENT: RESTLESS

We are restless nomads, wandering to find an anchor point for our longings. We invest our worship in a person, a place, a position, in the effort to find our home. But we inevitably discover that the walls aren't those of home. And then the quest begins anew to subdue our aching.

But the Shepherd searches the high hills and hidden nooks where we nomad-sheep have settled. He presses us snug around his neck and implants us in the field of his Father's heart. And when we hear the siren appeal and find ourselves hopping fences once again and darting after dim, faraway lights that promise warmth but are destined to fade, he calls us by name.

And so we call back, "Send out your light and your truth; let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling. Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy, (Psalm 43.3-4a).



"Still Point" Makoto Fujimura

COLLECT FOR THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Fifth Sunday	March 29	Psalm 130	Feast Day
Monday	March 30	Luke 19:28-48	Day 29
Tuesday	March 31	Luke 20:1-18	Day 30
Wednesday	April 1	Luke 20:19-47	Day 31
Thursday	April 2	Luke 21:1-19	Day 32
Friday	April 3	Luke 21:20-38	Day 33
Saturday	April 4	Psalm 42, 43	Day 34

HOLY WEEK: DEAD

... But that Christ on this Cross, did rise and fall,
Sin had eternally benighted all.
Yet dare I almost be glad, I do not see
That spectacle of too much weight for me.
Who sees God's face, that is self life, must die;
What a death were it then to see God die?
It made his own Lieutenant Nature shrink,
It made his footstool crack, and the Sun wink.
Could I behold those hands which span the Poles,
And tune all spheres at once pierced with those holes?
Could I behold that endless height which is
Zenith to us, and our Antipodes,
Humbled below us? or that blood which is
The seat of all our Souls, if not of his,
Made dirt of dust, or that flesh which was worn
By God, for his apparel, ragged, and torn?

- John Donne, from "Good Friday, Riding Westward 1613"



"Zero Summer" Makoto Fujimura

COLLECT FOR PALM SUNDAY

Almighty and everliving God, in your tender love for the human race you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and also share in his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Palm Sunday	April 5	Psalm 31.9-16	Feast Day
Monday	April 6	Luke 22:1-23	Day 35
Tuesday	April 7	Luke 22:24-38	Day 36
Wednesday	April 8	Luke 22:39-71	Day 37
Maundy Thursday	April 9	Luke 23:1-25	Day 38
Good Friday	April 10	Luke 23:26-49	Day 39
Holy Saturday	April 11	Luke 23:50-56	Day 40

CLOSING MEDITATION: PSALM 88

- 1 O LORD, God of my salvation;
I cry out day and night before you.
- 2 Let my prayer come before you;
incline your ear to my cry!
- 3 For my soul is full of troubles,
and my life draws near to Sheol.
- 4 I am counted among those who go down to the pit;
I am a man who has no strength,
- 5 like one set loose among the dead,
like the slain that lie in the grave,
like those whom you remember no more,
for they are cut off from your hand.
- 6 You have put me in the depths of the pit,
in the regions dark and deep.
- 7 Your wrath lies heavy upon me,
and you overwhelm me with all your waves. Selah
- 8 You have caused my companions to shun me;
you have made me a horror to them.
I am shut in so that I cannot escape;
- 9 my eye grows dim through sorrow.
Every day I call upon you, O LORD;
I spread out my hands to you.
- 10 Do you work wonders for the dead?
Do the departed rise up to praise you? Selah
- 11 Is your steadfast love declared in the grave,
or your faithfulness in Abaddon?
- 12 Are your wonders known in the darkness,
or your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?
- 13 But I, O LORD, cry to you;
in the morning my prayer comes before you.
- 14 O LORD, why do you cast my soul away?
Why do you hide your face from me?
- 15 Afflicted and close to death from my youth up,
I suffer your terrors; I am helpless.
- 16 Your wrath has swept over me;
your dreadful assaults destroy me.

17 They surround me like a flood all day long;
they close in on me together.

18 You have caused my beloved and my friend to shun me;
my companions have become darkness.



"Passion" Makoto Fujimura



THE CHURCH OF THE
RESURRECTION