

Lent 2021

St Mary of the Cross Parish



**St Brigid's Mordialloc
and St Louis' Aspendale**

Song:

Way Maker *Caleb and Kelsey*

You are here, moving in our midst

I worship You

I worship You

You are here, working in this place

I worship You

I worship You

You are here, moving in our midst

I worship You

I worship You

You are here, working in this place

I worship You

I worship You

You are

Way maker, miracle worker, promise keeper

Light in the darkness, my God

That is who You are

You are

Way maker, miracle worker, promise keeper

Light in the darkness, my God

That is who You are

You are here, touching every heart

I worship You

I worship You

You are here, mending every heart

I worship You

I worship You

You are

Way maker, miracle worker, promise keeper

Light in the darkness, my God

That is who You are

Way maker, miracle worker, promise keeper

Light in the darkness, my God

That is who You are

You are

Even when I don't see it, You're working
Even when I don't feel it, You're working
You never stop, You never stop working
You never stop, You never stop working
Even when I don't see it, You're working
Even when I don't feel it, You're working
You never stop, You never stop working
You never stop, You never stop working

Way maker, miracle worker, promise keeper
Light in the darkness, my God
That is who You are
Way maker, miracle worker, promise keeper
Light in the darkness, my God
That is who You are

First Sunday of Lent

Opening Prayer

Loving God,
As we begin our Lenten Journey
We pray that the mists that can cloud
Our vision may lift, so that we may see
The road that lies before us and so come
With open hearts to you, the source of
living water. Melt what is frozen within us,
warm our hearts, and lift our spirits that
we do not lose heart in our capacity to
grow, or in your desire
to lead us safely home.
Amen

**We have been called to heal wounds,
To unite what has fallen apart,
And to bring home those
Who have lost their way.**

St Francis of Assisi

Gospel

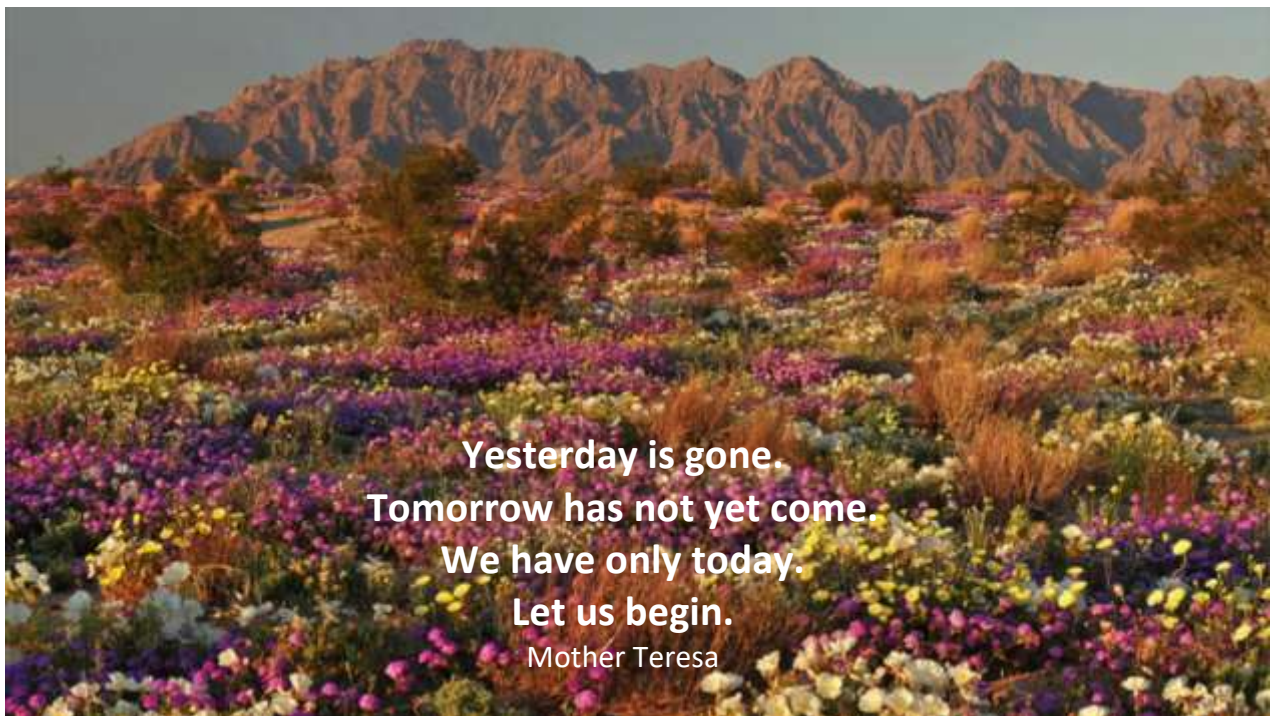
Mark 1:12-15

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness and he remained there for forty days, and was tempted by Satan. He was with the wild beasts, and the angels looked after him.

After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the Good News from God. 'The time has come' he said 'and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News.'

Reflection:

Perhaps the most important message of the time Jesus spent in the wilderness is that he was led in by the Spirit and *led out* by the Spirit. When we face daunting alternatives that lead to either, drawing forth our goodness or hiding it further, beneficial assistance arrives when we pray to the Spirit for guidance and choose to do what aligns with the teachings of Jesus,



Questions:

For the Jews and Christians, the rainbow is a sign of hope and a source of strength. What are some practical ways that we can play our role as sources of hope and encouragement this Lent?

Jesus was led into the desert to better understand his identity and mission as God's Son. How will you use this desert time of Lent to grow in your own sense of mission as a disciple?

Guiding Spirit
when opposing forces in me tug and pull
and I am caught in the tension of choices,
nudge me to pay attention and to pray.
I trust that you will continually lead me
to make wise decisions toward what is good.

Today: *I make decisions that come from my best self.*

Prayer:

Loving God, as we commence this Lenten journey, may we do so filled with the certain hope that Jesus Travels with us as companion and guide. He is the treasure hidden in the field of our lives. We pray for eyes that are open to see the gifts that are offered to us in this time, and hearts that are open to respond with generosity and love. Amen

Second Sunday of Lent

Song: **Way Maker** *Caleb and Kelsey (pages 2-3)*

**Now one of the things we must cast
out first of all is fear. Fear narrows the
little entrance to our heart. It shrinks
up our capacity to love. It freezes up
our power to give ourselves. If we were
terrified of God as an inexorable judge,
we would not confidently await His
mercy, or approach Him trustfully in
prayer. Our peace and our joy in Lent
are a guarantee of grace.**

Thomas Merton

Gospel

Mark 9:5-8

Then Peter spoke to Jesus: 'Rabbi,' he said 'it is wonderful for us to be here; so let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' He did not know what to say; they were so frightened. And a cloud came, covering them in shadow; and there came a voice from the cloud, 'This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him.' Then suddenly, when they looked round, they saw no one with them any more but only Jesus.

**Gratitude is
The memory
Of the Heart.**

Mary Mackillop

Reflection

The transfiguration reveals the glory of Jesus to disciples. Having seen something of Jesus' glory revealed it is understandable that Peter wanted to remain there on the mountain. For our journey we need to keep our eyes, minds, and hearts fixed on Jesus. We are invited to listen to him along the way and learn from his teaching, courage, and example.



Questions

In the journey of faith there are moments when we glimpse something of the glory of God. These moments, that can pass so quickly, transform us and become sources of much-needed hope and courage. Like the disciples, we are invited to remember such moments with gratitude as we face our lives with all their own joys and sorrows, struggles and achievements.

Life has a way of presenting us with challenges; some of them can lead us to lose heart and lose hope. How do you feel when you listen to Paul's words reminding us that we have nothing to fear with God on our side?

Peter wanted to stay on the mountain of the Transfiguration, but the challenging journey to Jerusalem was just about to begin. Are there any journeys that this Lent is inviting you to take?

Beloved One

How wondrous a gift to be forever loved,
for you to extend a wide welcome to me.

When I hesitate to believe in this reality,
Steer my misgivings towards your assurance
And hold me close to your all-embracing heart.

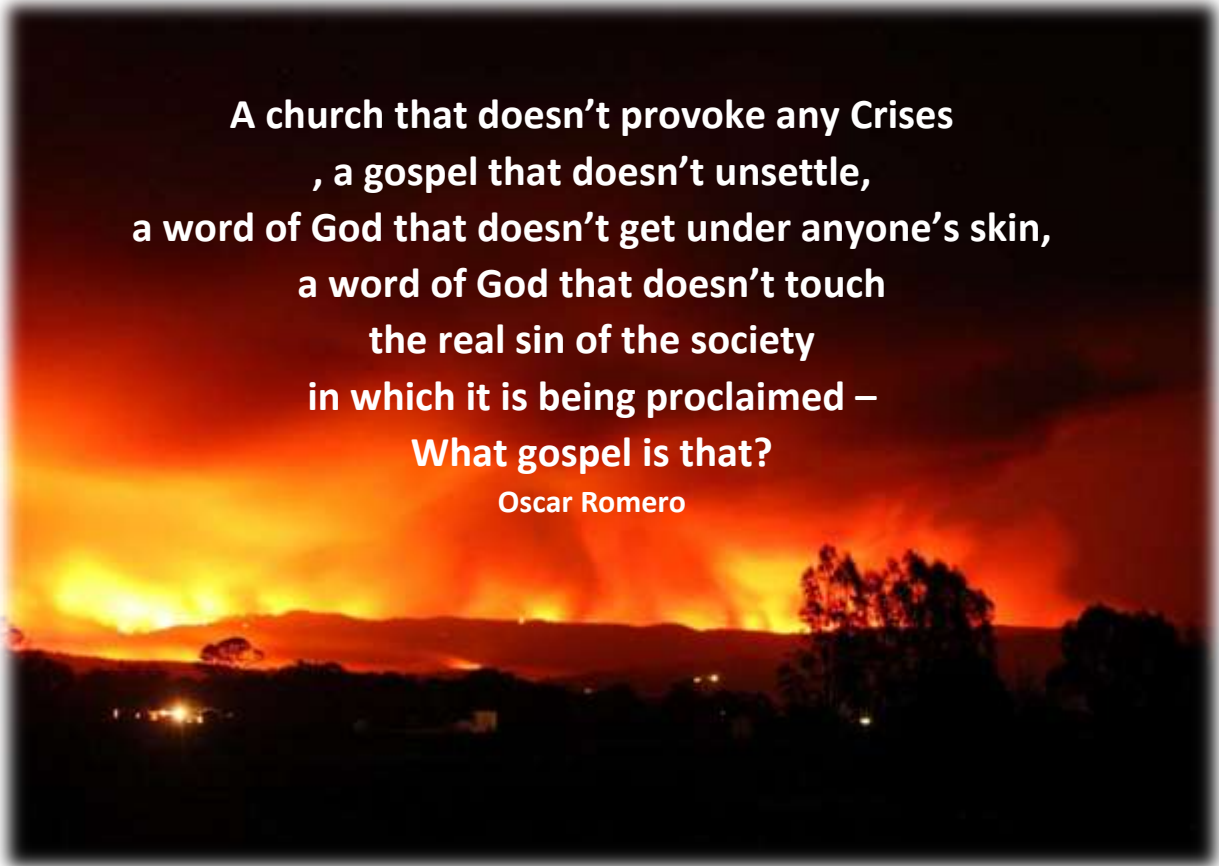
Today: *I ponder the wonder and truth of being beloved*

Prayer

Loving God, like Peter, James and John, we long to see the glory of Jesus your Son. You call us to listen to him in the midst of the clouds of life that can overshadow us. May our knowledge that he is with us be enough to strengthen our faith, hope and love. Amen

Third Sunday of Lent

Song: **Way Maker** *Caleb and Kelsey* (pages 2-3)



**A church that doesn't provoke any Crises
, a gospel that doesn't unsettle,
a word of God that doesn't get under anyone's skin,
a word of God that doesn't touch
the real sin of the society
in which it is being proclaimed –
What gospel is that?**

Oscar Romero

Gospel

John 2:13-25

Just before the Jewish Passover Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and in the Temple he found people selling cattle and sheep and pigeons, and the money changers sitting at their counters there. Making a whip out of some cord, he drove them all out of the Temple, cattle and sheep as well, scattered the money changers' coins, knocked their tables over and said to the pigeon-sellers, 'Take all this out of here and stop turning my Father's house into a market.' Then his disciples remembered the words of scripture: Zeal for your house will devour me. The Jews intervened and said, 'What sign can you show us to justify what you have done?' Jesus answered, 'Destroy this sanctuary, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews replied, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this sanctuary: are you going to raise it up in three days?' But he was speaking of the sanctuary that was his body, and when Jesus rose from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and the words he had said.

Reflection

Commerce was necessary to sustain the worship of God in his temple. Animals had to be sold for sacrifice, Roman money changed into Jewish money to pay the temple tax. But where should this commerce take place? Not within the temple precinct! Jesus is angry that "my Father's house" was being turned into a marketplace. Does Jesus express his anger appropriately? What might desecrate our places of worship today?

Questions

Paul spoke of how the wisdom of the cross confronted the ideas of power and wisdom of his own time. What does it mean to you? How would you explain it to someone who is seeking to understand why Jesus died?

When Jesus saw the practices of the Temple of his time, he acted. Are there issues that you feel we should address as a faith community?

His (Christ) words were simple yet profound. And they shook people, provoking either happy acceptance or violent rejection. People were never the same after listening to him . . . the people who followed Him were unique in their generation. They turned the world upside down because their hearts had been turned right side up. The world has never been the same.

Billy Graham

*Authentic Teacher,
Clear away any debris of hidden falseness
That has formed cataracts on my view of self.
I desire to see my harmful habits more clearly.
May I also have a better vision of the ways
that I already live as a person of clear integrity.*

Today: My words and deeds match my truest self

Prayer

Loving God, in this time of Lent open our hearts and minds, so that we can work with Jesus to overturn our attitudes and behaviours that do not make for life. May the wisdom of the cross be the compass that directs our lives and leads us to you. **Amen.**



The Fourth Sunday of Lent

Song: *Way Maker Caleb and Kelsey (pages 2-3)*

**The spiritual task of life is to feed
Hope. Hope is not something to be found outside us.
It lies in the spiritual life we cultivate within.
The whole purpose of wrestling with life is to be
transformed into the self we are meant to become, to step
out of the confines of our false securities and allow our creating
God to go on creating.**

In us. Joan Chittister

Gospel

John 3:14-21

Jesus said to Nicodemus:


‘The Son of Man must be lifted up
as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert,
so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.
Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost
but may have eternal life.
For God sent his Son into the world
not to condemn the world,
but so that through him the world might be saved.

Reflection

In this time of Lent, it lifts up our spirits and strengthens our resolve to know that God is infinitely rich in grace. It is all too easy for Christians of any generation to forget about God’s grace when we focus on our call to holiness. For Paul it is not a matter of earning grace or salvation, but responding to God’s gift so freely and generously given with gratitude in our hearts. Each one of us is God’s work, shaped and created by the master potter and set the task of co-operating with God to become all that we have been created to be.

The people of Israel learned that God was working for their good in the events of history, and sometimes, by means of foreign rulers. How do you see God at work in the world today?

That God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son is at the heart of the Gospel message. Why do you think people have such difficulty believing this Good News?



We do not build the kingdom of God on earth by our own efforts (however assisted by grace); The most we can do through Genuine prayer, is to make As much room as possible, in Ourselves and in the world, for The kingdom of God, so that its Energies can go to work. All that We can show our contemporaries Of the reality of God springs from Contemplation: Jesus, the Church Our own selves.

Hans Urs von Balthasar

Giver of gifts,
My heart opens wide with gratitude,
Knowing my life is filled with abundance.
Even on tough days, if I look carefully,
I can always find something of worth within it.
Thus, I come to you with thanksgiving.

Today: I look for goodness and kindness and give thanks.

Prayer

Loving God, your gracious love for us is so immense we cannot even begin to comprehend it, but we can gratefully receive it, and the hope it brings us. You have given us Jesus and lifted him up to draw us to yourself so that we can see the depth of your love for us. For this we give thanks. Amen.

The Fifth Sunday of Lent

Song: **Christ Alone** Leith and Kristy Getty

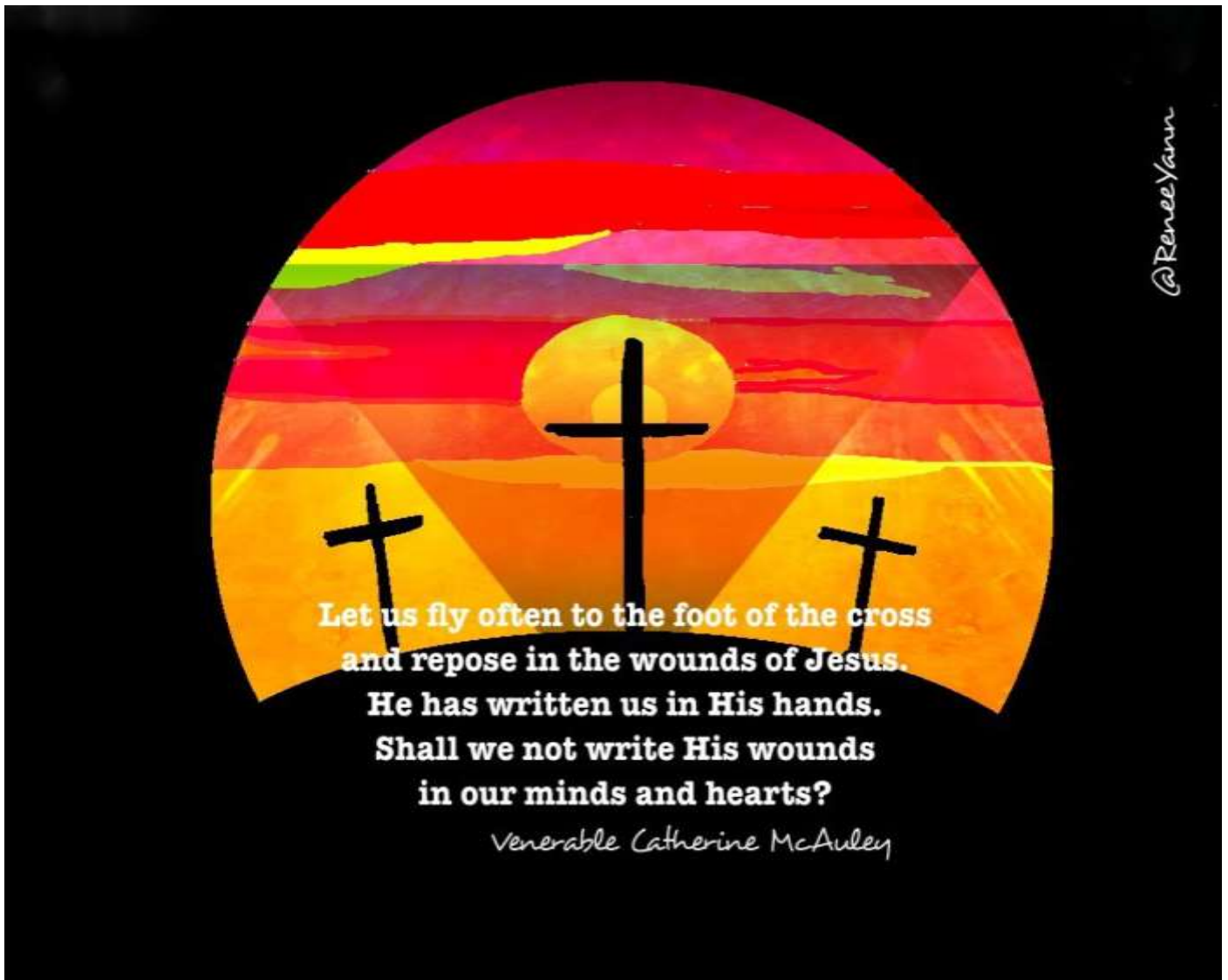
In Christ alone my hope is found;
He is my light, my strength, my song;
This cornerstone, this solid ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My comforter, my all in all—
Here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone, Who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless !
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones He came to save.
Till on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied;
For ev'ry sin on Him was laid—
Here in the of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain;
Then bursting forth in glorious day,
Up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory,
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me;
For I am His and He is mine—
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death—
This is the pow'r of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand;
Till He returns or calls me home—
Here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand.
No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand;
Till He returns or calls me home—
Here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand.





Gospel

John 12:20-33

Among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. These approached Philip, who came from Bethsaida in Galilee, and put this request to him, 'Sir, we should like to see Jesus.' Philip went to tell Andrew, and Andrew and Philip together went to tell Jesus. Jesus replied to them:

'Now the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

I tell you, most solemnly,
unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies,
it remains only a single grain; but if it dies,
it yields a rich harvest.

Anyone who loves his life loses it;
anyone who hates his life in this world
will keep it for the eternal life.

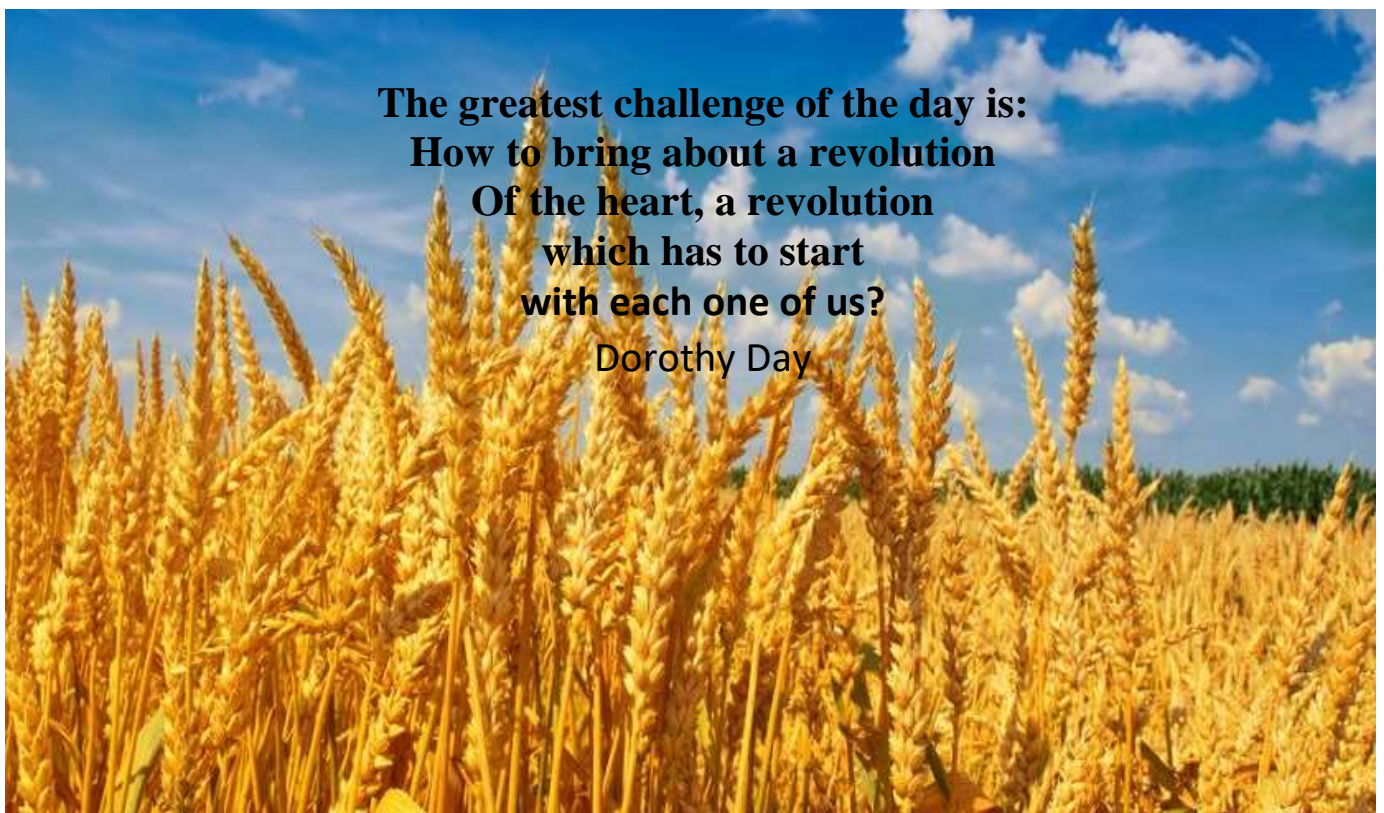
If a man serves me, he must follow me,
wherever I am, my servant will be there too.

If anyone serves me, my Father will honour him.
Now my soul is troubled.
What shall I say: Father, save me from this hour?
But it was for this very reason that I have come to this hour.
Father, glorify your name!’

A voice came from heaven, ‘I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.’ People standing by, who heard this, said it was a clap of thunder; others said, ‘It was an angel speaking to him.’ Jesus answered, ‘It was not for my sake that this voice came, but for yours.

‘Now sentence is being passed on this world;
now the prince of this world is to be overthrown.
And when I am lifted up from the earth,
I shall draw all men to myself.’

By these words he indicated the kind of death he would die.



Reflection

Every disciple is invited to take up the task of losing their life in order to find it. It is a challenge that we face in the circumstances, relationships, and tasks that are all part of our lives. There are many ways the grain of wheat must be buried and die in order for us to grow: overcoming pride and asking forgiveness where it is needed; shifting the focus from ourselves and reaching out to others in their need; giving our time and energies to relieve the burden another carries.

It is by loving and giving of ourselves that we learn the lesson that Jesus’ life taught so eloquently. Love that it is in giving that we receive. This time of Lent is an invitation for our hearts to grow.

Questions

Jesus likened his own life, death and resurrection to the grain of wheat that falls into the ground and dies. Have there been times in your life that you have experienced this? Does it encourage you to know that even Jesus' heart was troubled at times?



**Courageous Christ,
On that day when you rode upon the donkey,
Processing amid the cheering palm-wavers,
Surely your courage struggled to remain intact.
I will face my entrance into unavoidable suffering
And draw strength from your ability to accept it.**

Today: I draw courage from how Jesus entered Jerusalem.

Prayer Loving God, in this time of Lent we plant the seeds of your New Covenant deep in our lives and hearts. Help us to tend these seeds so that your new life may grow within us, and we become part of the rich harvest that Jesus promised. Amen

Palm Sunday

Song: **Christ Alone** Leith and Kristy Getty (Pages 11-12)

Gospel

Mark 14:33-36

Then he took Peter, James and John along with him. And a sudden fear came over Him, and great distress. And he said to them, my soul is sorrowful to the point of death. Wait here, and keep awake. And going on a little further he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, this hour might pass him by. He said Abba (Father)! Everything is possible for you. Take this cup away from me. But let it be as you, not, I, would have it.

Reflection

In Mark 15:34 Jesus cries out in agony on the cross in the words of Psalm 22, "My God, my God, why have you forsake me?" and a few short verses later he dies with a loud cry. Surprisingly, it is the manner of the death of Jesus that will lead the centurion to declare

him to be God's Son in Mark 15:39. It is a confronting and painful death, and scholars have long pondered how stark it is. Jesus does not die with the peaceful words of Psalm 31:5 placing his life into God's hands as in Luke 23:46, nor does he declare that his task is completed as in John 19:30. Mark wants the reader to know that the one they profess as Son of God and Messiah is the one who will always understand our fears, struggles and difficulties because he has shared in them and always will. This is the one to whom we can turn as disciples with total trust, especially in times of difficulty, trial, and death.



Questions

When Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane he wrestled with God's will for him. He felt vulnerable, but also discovered deep within the strength to face what lay ahead. Does this help you carry your own Crosses?

Simon of Cyrene helped carry Jesus cross. Have there been times when others have helped you carry your own cross?

Compassionate One,
Open my eyes clearly enough to recognize where suffering exists in the lives of others.
Open my heart deeply enough to activate a sense of empathy and willingness to care.
Open my hands wide enough to offer assistance.

Today: I respond compassionately to those who suffer.

**I believe in Christianity
As I believe that the sun has risen:
Not only because I see it,
But because by it
I see everything else.**

C. S. Lewis

