

Nudges of the Spirit



Meditations for March 31st to April 6th

Nudges of the Spirit is currently a ministry of Deacon Carolyn Quinnell, Sandy Freiburger and Denise Bersos.
This week's selections have been written by Carolyn.

Sunday, March 31st Easter Day Acts 10:34-43 or Isaiah 25:6-9 / Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24 / 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 or Acts 10:34-43 / John 20:1-18 or Mark 16:1-8 (*written by Carolyn*)

John 20:16 *Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher).*

Alleluia! The Lord is Risen!! For the followers of Jesus, the custom of sitting Shiva has just been interrupted in a spectacular way. But, why Mary? Why not the mother of Jesus, or Peter, or John? After all, Peter and John had just been at the tomb and there were no angels, and certainly no Jesus. While there have been some "theories" through the years, I would suggest that Jesus knew Mary's heart would be open to seeing Him. Maybe He just wanted the first person who saw Him to be someone who both had the courage to approach the tomb before daybreak, and the unconditional love in her heart to not question how she could be seeing Him. She just knew what her eyes were telling her was true. May we too have the faith of Mary.

Welcome happy morning! Amen.

Monday in Easter Week, April 1st Psalm 16:8-11 or Psalm 118:19-24 / Acts 2:14, 22b-32 / Matthew 28:9-15
(*written by Carolyn*)

Matthew 28:13 (the priests & elders said to the guards) *"You must say, 'His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.'"*

I know of no one who likes to be proven wrong. In fact, there are times when we are so entrenched in our beliefs that when proof says otherwise, we adamantly refute said proof and instead cling to our ideas. Given that, the priests and elders in the verse above did a very human thing by bribing the guards to keep silent. That's too bad because the guards would have witnessed the risen Jesus speaking to the women, thereby having proof positive evidence that He had risen. Yet, even if afterwards they became believers, they had accepted the bribe and could never publicly acknowledge Him. However, before we judge them too harshly, let us examine ourselves to see if any of our past actions/beliefs have kept us "stuck" from seeing the truth.

Lord, please help me to move past my "stuck-ness" into your light. Amen

Tuesday in Easter Week, April 2nd Psalm 33:18-22 or Psalm 118:19-24 / Acts 2:36-41 / John 20:11-18 (*written by Carolyn*)

Acts 2:41 *So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added.*

Wow. Talk about an altar call! Can you imagine? Try putting yourself into this scene. Where are you? Has your heart been stirred by Peter's words, or are you already counted among the believers? Either way, the Holy Spirit is busy touching the many hearts and minds that are open to hearing about the risen Christ. Now back to our time today. Has the Holy Spirit been working in your life? It may not be as dramatic as what happened right after Peter's speech, but I'm guessing that, because you are reading these words, Christ has moved in your life. If so, praise the Lord – in whatever manner fits your personality type.

Lord, use me to spread your word, your love. Amen.

Wednesday in Easter Week, April 3rd Psalm 105:1-8 or Psalm 118:19-24 / Acts 3:1-10 / Luke 24:13-35 (*written by Carolyn*)

From the Collect (prayer) for today: O God, whose blessed Son made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread: Open the eyes of our faith, that we may behold him in all his redeeming work; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Like Holy Week, our (global) church gives us a prayer for each day of the week following Easter. I love the part of this particular collect which reads, "Open the eyes of our faith, that we may behold him in all his redeeming work." I think about these words when someone has had surgery and the doctor reports that the procedure went remarkably smooth. Was it that the "stars lined up correctly that day" or that Jesus was present in the operating room guiding everything that was being done? There are countless other situations where Jesus had a hand in what was happening: an unexpected check came in the mail when it was needed, or we had a slowdown in traffic that enabled us to avoid being in a serious accident. I'm sure you can think of some for yourselves. Things like the traffic example may seem like an inconvenience, but what if ...?

Jesus, thank you for all the times you intervene for me, and I don't even realize you're there. Amen.

Thursday in Easter Week, April 4th Psalm 8 or Psalm 114 or Psalm 118:19-24 / Acts 3:11-26 / Luke 24:36b-48
(written by Carolyn)

Luke 24:41-43 *While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence.*

When I was first beginning to study scripture, I made the comment to my rector that several times in His post-resurrection appearances Jesus asked for something to eat. I was sure I was so brilliant to figure this out, so he asked me why I thought Jesus would be asking for food. I thought for a second and said, "Because ghosts don't eat." I now realize that people have been knowing this for centuries and I had not come upon a new biblical truth, but apparently it was something I needed to know for my own spiritual journey. It solidified a head knowledge into my heart. It was an "ah-ha" moment that yes, Jesus did bodily rise from the grave. There have been many other "ah-ha" moments, and I fully expect even more because I know I will never grasp all the wonders and teachings scripture has for me.

Lord, thank you for the gift of scripture! Amen.

Friday in Easter Week, April 5th Psalm 116:1-8 or Psalm 118:19-24 / Acts 4:1-12 / John 21:1-14 (written by Carolyn)

John 21:9-10 *When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught."*

Did you notice that Jesus already had fish cooking on the fire? He didn't need the fish he just directed the disciples to catch, nevertheless he welcomed it. Let that sink in for a moment. Then think about whether or not Jesus needs us to do His bidding. While we may want to think He does, I suspect the true answer is that even if we who are His followers fail to obey, He could have the stones rise up to do His bidding (see Luke 19:39-40). My point is, Jesus welcomes our actions – just as He welcomed the fish the disciples caught. Another point, the disciples in the boat who had been fishing all night did not question the instructions to cast their nets one more time. They just did it. May we so readily follow the instructions Jesus gives us.

Lord, guide me as I try to follow you. Amen.

Saturday, April 6th Psalm 118:14-18 or Psalm 118:19-24 / Acts 4:13-21 / Mark 16:9-15, 20 (written by Carolyn)

Acts 4:13 *When the rulers and elders and scribes saw the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and ordinary men, they were amazed and recognized them as companions of Jesus.*

Every now and then I will meet a priest who did not attend a traditional seminary, but instead was taught in less traditional ways under the guidance of a bishop. By the same token, Peter and John may not have had the same formal education that the elders and scribes had, but I would beg to differ that they were uneducated. They

learned from the greatest teacher of all times – Jesus himself. Both the modern-day priests as well as the disciples point out (for me) that it's not about the initials after your name, but instead the love that's in your heart.

Lord, teach me your ways. Amen.

