

The United Church of Canada
**St Francis Manoir & Grace Village
& Manoir Stanstead**

A service for personal meditations at home
Lent 2021 (week 2)

Grounding Prayer

(Take a deep breath, center yourself within the love of God)

God, You are present, may I be transformed by this encounter.

Opening Prayer:

Gracious God, I want to see your goodness in the land of the living—here and now, in this world of flesh and blood, in the midst of deep fears and desperate hopes. Give me grace to put my trust in your mercy, even when my heart aches out in fear. Help us notice the whisper of your presence amid all the noise and news that clamour and threaten. Let your love, like a healing stream, flow through us and carry us onward to a new day. May it be so, may it be so. Amen.

Christ Light:

I light this candle, remembering that I live in God's world and I am not alone.

Prayer of Illumination:

Challenging God, you have guided your people throughout the ages to sing and pray and reflect. You invite me to listen to timeless stories. Help us to receive the ever-new message of radical love. May it find a place to rest deep in our souls, so that we might draw strength and courage. Amen.

A Reading from the Gospel of Mark 8:31-38

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

The Living Word, I listen with my heart, my mind and my spirit.

Candle Meditation:

On Sunday morning, for a brief space of time, we leave behind the world of home and work and school—the world where we have our lists of things to do, activities to participate in, tasks to complete. We come here this morning seeking something else. We come here seeking a shift—from the ordinary to the sacred, from doing to being. I invite you to close your eyes. Let go of your list. Recall that it is the season of Lent. Remember the parable of the sower. The sower throws the seed . . . and where it lands determines if it will grow or not grow. Think of it this way: think of the season of Lent as the sower, the time when seeds of faith are thrown with special intensity, as a time when God calls to us in a low, urgent voice. Listen. Jesus is being drawn to Jerusalem. Where is God calling you to? What is God calling you to do?

(Silent time.)

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of ongoing tension with First Nations- and the legacy of colonialism we struggle to work past. We remember the missing & murdered Indigenous women, the recent fisheries dispute in Nova Scotia, and the everyday discrimination exemplified in the mistreatment of Joyce Echaquan in a Quebec hospital . Reconciliation requires respect. We are our brother's Keeper.

(A candle is extinguished.)

Prayer of Reflection:

Loving God, as we journey through this holy season of Lent, may we be open to your presence. Give us the strength to make the changes that are needed in our lives and the courage to take on the work of transforming the world. I pray using the words Jesus gave to his disciples;

Our Father, who art in heaven...

Blessing & Commissioning

May the path that Christ walks to bring justice upon the earth, to bring light to those who sit in shadows, to bring out those who live in servitude, and to bring new things to all creation, may this path run through our lives. May I be the road Christ takes. Amen.

Hymn: (VU561) Take Up Your Cross

"Take up your cross," the Savior said,
"if you would my disciple be;
take up your cross with willing heart,
and humbly follow after me."

Take up your cross; let not its weight
fill your weak spirit with alarm;
Christ's strength shall bear your spirit up
and brace your heart and nerve your arm.

Take up your cross, heed not the shame,
and let your foolish heart be still;
the Lord for you accepted death
upon a cross, on Calvary's hill.

Take up your cross, then, in Christ's strength,
and calmly ev'ry danger brave:
it guides you to abundant life
and leads to vict'ry o'er the grave.

Prayers by:

OP: John Moses, Gathering Lent 2021 (Year B), pg.30.

CM: Rev. Lee Ann Hogle, Beulah United-St Paul's United-Georgeville United, Lent 2021.

PI: Laura Turnbull, Gathering Lent 2021 (Year B), pg.37.

BC: Aaron Palmer , Gathering Lent 2021 (Year B), pg.37.