



Holy Week Meditations

Holy Week is a high point in the Christian Church calendar. Beginning with Palm Sunday and ending with the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, this week commemorates the final days of Jesus' earthly life as he reaches the height of his Passion.

There are many means by which to engage the deep spiritual themes of this week. What follows are some focused elements that can be used throughout Holy Week to assist your contemplation of the person of Jesus and your commitment to follow Him. To consider, again, how the events of the past should affect our living in the present.

There's a different focus for each day of the week, which includes an event, some scripture, and prompts inviting reflection and prayer. Also provided is a Visio Divina exercise with a painting titled, *Temptation in the Wilderness*. This visually-driven practice of observation and imagination provides another means to contemplate and respond to God.

Throughout this week, may you experience the wondrous mystery of the life, suffering, death, and victory of Jesus in a profound and meaningful way.

Visio Divina

This is a practice of experiencing God through your sense of sight and your imagination. As you gaze at the painting (see page 2), release yourself from other thoughts and simply be present with the image. Allow it to speak to your heart without any particular agenda, using the prompts below to assist your interaction.

As you observe and contemplate the painting, stay with anything that catches your attention or evokes an emotion. You might choose to first focus on a small part of the image before looking at the whole. Then, as you feel led, respond with reflection, meditation, journaling, or prayer.

The suggested time for this practice is 15-30 minutes. This is also terrific to do with a group, sharing your observations and reflections with one another.

A Prayer for Holy Week

*Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—
our faithful, true, and living God.*

*You spoke a promise long ago,
fulfilled through the love-born agony
of Salvation's Lord,
our Pioneering Savior,
King Jesus.*

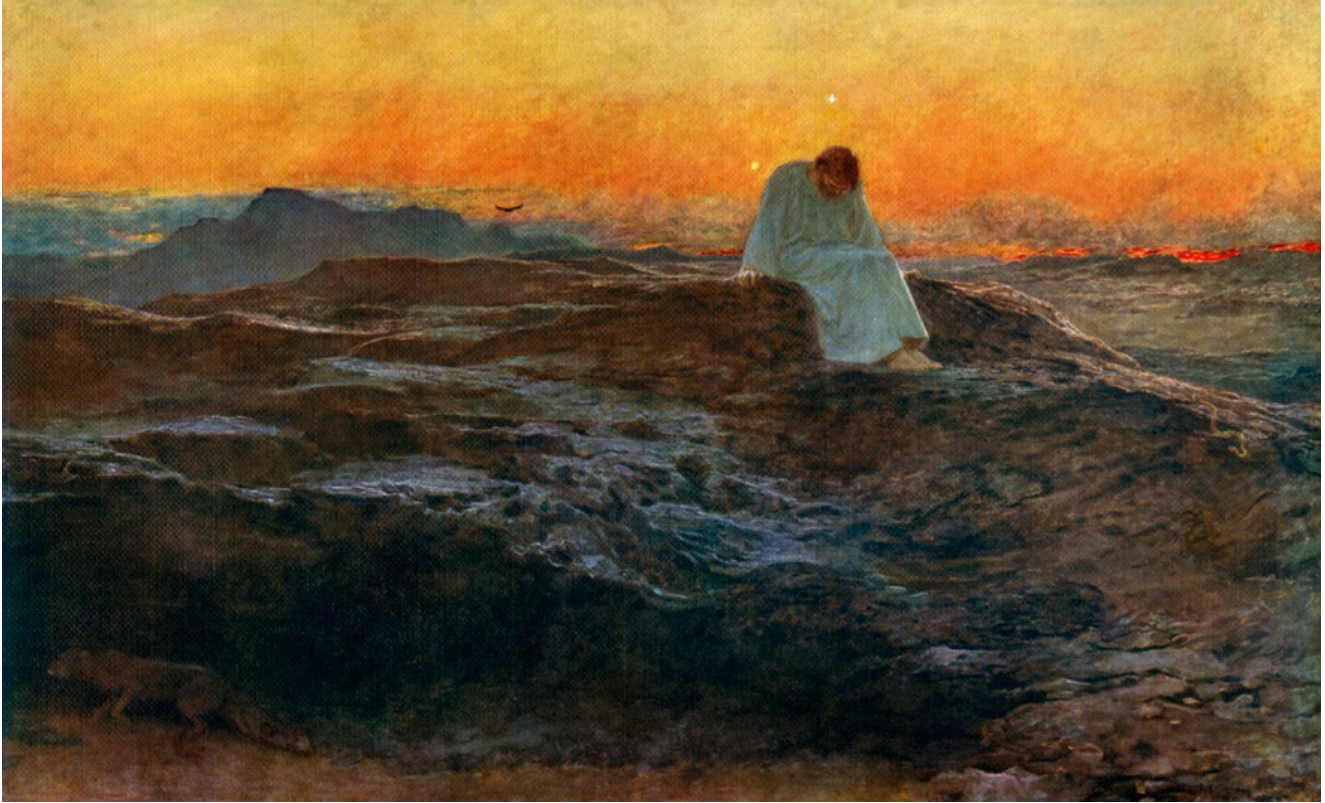
*Spirit of God,
I welcome your presence.
Pry open my spirit to receive
your expressions of holy love.*

*Comfort me in life's bright sadness
with the joy of my resurrected life.*

Amen.



Visio Divina



Briton Rivière - *Temptation in the Wilderness*, 1898

Visio Divina Prompts:

- ~ How do you feel looking at the image?
- ~ If you had to describe the image in a sentence or two, what would you say?
- ~ If you were in the image, where would you place yourself?
- ~ Do you get a glimpse of the sacred from this image? Is God speaking to you in this image? How?
- ~ Does a name for God arise for you from this image? In silence, sit with what you have received.
- ~ Does this image lead you into an attitude of prayer? If so, let these prayers take form in you. Write them down if you desire.
- ~ Ask God how you should respond to this image. For example, the image might move you to confession, repentance, gratitude, praise, forgiveness, lament, or service.



A Daily Meditation

Palm Sunday through Resurrection Sunday

Palm Sunday | A Messiah's Welcome

- Holy Week Event: Jesus enters Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1-11)
- Related Scripture: Genesis 3:15, Isaiah 7:14, Micah 5:2, Zechariah 9:9
- Prompt: In a quiet space, ponder what Jesus was experiencing (his thoughts, emotions, through his senses, etc.) as He entered Jerusalem to begin the week that would end in his death. Respond to Him in prayer with whatever emotions, feelings, or thoughts you receive.

Monday | True Religion

- Holy Week Event: Jesus clears the Temple (Matthew 21:12-16)
- Related Scripture: Psalm 24:1-6, Psalm 51:10-17, Jeremiah 7:1-8, James 1:27
- Prompt: What does it mean to you to be a follower of Jesus? Be personal and specific. As you ponder and pray over that question, invite God to speak to you about what you might need to stop, start, or change as you strive to be whole-hearted to your commitment of faith in Jesus Christ.

Tuesday | Sacrificial Obedience

- Holy Week Event: Jesus anointed at Bethany (Matthew 26:6-13)
- Related Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:4-5, Psalm 1, Micah 6:8
- Prompt: Contemplate how your belief in Jesus influences your ability to embrace a life focused on loving Him and serving others. Are you receptive, distracted, focused, fearful, committed, wandering, frustrated, devoted, passive? Talk with God about whatever you're feeling or that the Spirit brings to mind. Be honest with yourself, and with God, not reserving any struggle or tension you might be experiencing.

Wednesday | We are all betrayers

- Holy Week Event: Judas agrees to betray Jesus (Matthew 26:1-5, 14-16)
- Related Scripture: Psalm 53:2-3, Isaiah 53:5-6, Romans 3:10, Romans 3:23
- Prompt: Today, focus on confession. Ask the Spirit to reveal how you betray God with your words, thoughts, attitudes, and actions (or inaction). Receive His kindness, trusting that He welcomes your repentance and is glad to offer His forgiveness and acceptance.



Maundy Thursday | A New Command

- Holy Week Event: The Last Supper (Matthew 26:17-30)
- Related Scripture: John 15:12-13, 1 John 3:16
- Prompt: Invite God to speak to you about your choices and behaviors as it relates to loving all types of people. Caring for those in need. Embracing and assisting the discouraged, lonely, and lost. If you are prompted to make a change, ask God for specific direction and the courage to act.

Good Friday | Our Suffering Savior

- Holy Week Event: The Crucifixion (Matthew 27:11-56)
- Related Scripture: Philippians 3:10, Romans 8:17, Isaiah 53, 2 Corinthians 5:21
- Prompt: Spend this day contemplating the suffering of Jesus. Dwell on His unwavering obedience to fulfill God's promise by enduring a horrific, humiliating, torturous death. Ponder your inability to make things right on your own and your need for rescue and redemption. Respond to God as you feel led.

Holy Saturday | Crucified, Dead, and Buried

- Holy Week Event: The death and burial of Jesus (Matthew 27:57-66)
- Related Scripture: Isaiah 40:27-31, Romans 8:18-25, Titus 2:11-14
- Prompt: As we wait for God's justice and the restoration of all things, how are you persevering? Is your spirit hopeful, discouraged, grateful, checked-out, alive, numb? Talk to God about your perspective and attitude as it relates to embracing the Hope we have while living in the midst of a dark and desperate world.

Resurrection Sunday | Risen, just as He said!

- Holy Week Event: The Resurrection of Jesus (Matthew 28)
- Related Scripture: Luke 24:1-8, Romans 8:28-39, 1 Peter 1:3-9
- Prompt: Through prayer, singing, art, poetry, journaling, a walk outside, listening to music, sitting in silence, etc. open yourself to God's presence. Rest in the life of freedom you now have because Jesus conquered sin and death. Express to Him your deep gratitude for His love, grace, forgiveness, and salvation. Ask the Holy Spirit to equip and empower you to submit yourself to Jesus as Lord of your life. All hail King Jesus!

