

Lenten reflections

compiled for Lent 2022 by the
Rev Dr Michael Paterson



Ash Wednesday

Remember that you are dust
and to dust you shall return.

Collect for Lent

Almighty and everlasting God,
you despise 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 brokenness,
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.

O God, you have made us for yourself,
and against your longing there is no defence.
Mark us with your love, and release in us
a passion for your justice in our disfigured
world; that we may turn from our guilt and
face you, our heart's desire. Amen.

Janet Morley

Thursday

Will you meet us
in the ashes,
will you meet us
in the ache
and show your face
within our sorrow
and offer us
your word of grace ...
that you are what
survives the burning,
that you arise
to make us new.
And in our aching,
you are breathing;
and in our weeping,
you are here.

Jan Richardson

Friday

Let us be marked
not for false humility
or for thinking
we are less
than we are
but for claiming
what God can do
within the dust,
within the dirt,
within the stuff
of which the world
is made,
and the stars that blaze
in our bones,
and the galaxies that spiral
inside the smudge
we bear.

Jan Richardson

Saturday

Consider how you might keep Lent.
No matter what you do or fail to do
God will not love you any more
or any less.
You are already God's beloved.
What does being loved by God call out
of you today?
Or pray for someone who has
wronged you?
Perhaps you could fast from
an old grudge?
Or make a donation to a foodbank?
Prayer, fasting and almsgiving
are worthless
unless offered from a free heart.

Lent Week One



'And in the desert he was tempted'
Matthew 4.1-11

Sunday

God of the desert, as we follow Jesus into the
unknown, may we recognise the tempter
when he comes; let it be your bread we
eat, your world we serve and you alone we
worship.

A New Zealand Prayer Book

Monday

Lord Jesus Christ,
you refused to turn stones into bread.
Save us from using our power,
however little,
to satisfy the demands of selfishness
in the face of the needs of others.

Lord Jesus Christ,
you refused to leap from the temple top.
Save us from displaying our skills,
however modest,
to win instant popularity
in the face of nobler calls on our abilities.

Lord Jesus Christ,
You refused to bend the knee to a false god.
Save us from offering our devotion,
however weak,
to cheap or easy religion
in the face of the harder path
on which you bid us to follow you. Amen.

Iona Community

Tuesday

In the desert the most urgent thing is — to wait.
The desert does not take kindly to those who
tackle it at breakneck speed, subjecting it to
their plans and deadlines. It soon takes its
revenge and makes them pay dearly for their
presumption. Instead, the desert welcomes
those who shed their sandals of speed and
walk slowly in their bare feet, letting them be
caressed and burnt by the sand. If you have
no ambition to conquer the desert, if you do
not think you are in charge, if you can calmly
wait for things to be done, then the desert will
not consider you an intruder and will reveal
its secrets to you.

Alessandro Pronzato, Meditations on the Sand

Wednesday

If you have come to this Lenten desert
desolate,
if you have come here,
deflated,
then thank your lucky stars
the desert is where
you have landed –
here where it is hard to hide,
here where it is unwise
to rely on your own devices ..
I tell you,
this is where
you will receive
your life again.
I tell you,
this is where
the breath begins.

Jan Richardson, Circle of Grace

Thursday

‘Waiting, that’s all I have done since my
diagnosis. Waiting for doctors’ appointments;
waiting for new drugs and treatments; waiting
to feel better. And now, here I am still waiting.

I used to wait (or was it hope) for a cure but
those days are past. I now know that I am not
in charge any longer and that my deadlines
and plans are out the window.

But still I wait ... for the next painkiller, for
a nurse to answer my buzzer, for the fresh
flowers they bring to my bedside each day,
for my family and friends to visit. And in the
waiting I think I am beginning to let go and
trust that someone else is in charge, that all
is well with the world and that it will keep on
turning without me at the helm. Now why did
I wait so long to learn that?’

Friday

If you would enter into the wilderness,
do not begin without a blessing.
Do not leave
without hearing who you are:
Beloved, named by the One
who has traveled this path before you.
Do not go
without letting it echo in your ears,
and, if you find it is hard
to let it into your heart,
do not despair.
That is what this [Lenten] journey is for.

Jan Richardson

Saturday



Hold a stone in your hand. Some parts are
rough and other parts smooth. Think of the
rough parts as those parts of your life which
have not yet submitted to God’s grace and
healing: hard words, resentments, grudges,
refusal to forgive etc. and ask God each day of
Lent to help smooth over your rough places.
Then feel the smooth surfaces of the stone and
give thanks to God for those aspects of your
life in which you know God’s blessing and
presence.

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