

HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONALS

MARCH 2024



HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONALS

Sunday



BLESSED
by Lin Elizabeth Preiss



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SCRIPTURE READING

When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples and said to them, “Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.’”

They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, some of the bystanders said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields.



SCRIPTURE READING

Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting,

“Hosanna!

**Blessed is the one who comes
in the name of the Lord!**

**Blessed is the coming
kingdom of our ancestor David!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!”**

Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

Mark 11:1-11 NRSV



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REFLECTION

Love, faith, hope, and courage create the foundation for our perseverance as Christian peacemakers.

They are our anchors and propellers as we become healers within our conflict-warped contexts.

They enable us to fight like peacemakers for those oppressed by the abuse of power without dehumanizing the oppressor.

They fuel us to stand with, among, and for the marginalized as an integral demonstration of our followership of Jesus.



REFLECTION

Love, faith, hope, and courage reflect God's heart and character and are the fruit that propel us into the work of justice and righteousness with compassion.

They enable us to see every individual's divine imprint and belovedness and to bridge differences in ways that transform enemies into friends.

These are the four characteristics of those who actively seek the good of others and challenge injustice, not for the sake of revenge, but with a desire for restoration.



BREATH PRAYER

Inhale:

**God of Love, Faith, Hope,
and Courage**

Exhale:

**Here I am,
Send me**



AUTHOR BIO

Milad Vosgueritchian

Milad is a community leader and NGO director with over fifteen years' experience nurturing the next generation of peace leaders. He has inspired Palestinian youth to embrace nonviolence, built bridges between estranged Jerusalem area communities and put vocational training within reach for low-income Palestinian women. Milad is an internationally known public speaker seasoned in facilitating cross-cultural and interfaith encounters.



HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONALS

Monday



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by Lin Elizabeth Preiss

SCRIPTURE READING

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.)

John 12:1-6 NRSV



SCRIPTURE READING

Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

When the great crowd of the Jews learned that he was there, they came not only because of Jesus but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. So the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death as well, since it was on account of him that many of the Jews were deserting and were believing in Jesus.

John 12:7-11 NRSV



REFLECTION

I am learning to unclench my white grasp, move slowly, close my eyes, breathe deeply. Discernment demands my sense of smell. When attending to the subtleties of scent, falseness quickly becomes foul. Judas' cheap cologne blends with the stench of his performative solidarity. I repent of my own posturing.

I turn and attend to Jesus, anointed by aromas swirling around the room.

Martha's kitchen lures a motley crew salivating over yeasty bread braided with cedar hearth-fire. Lazarus' warm brown skin emanates the freshness of resurrection: desert sun intermingled with notes of crisp linen. Mary's perfumed hair enraptures the entire room.



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REFLECTION

Hints of honeysuckle and lavender whisper loudly of her extravagant love. These divine aromas dance out doorways, gathering friend and stranger alike in the presence of Jesus.

Like a sommelier-in-training, I slowly, deeply inhale this scene, discerning the movements of Holy Spirit wafting from Bethany throughout history and gracing my own neighborhood today. Justice smells like cardamom tea sipped by unlikely friends completing DSHS paperwork. Love restores with lilac-scented sheets from the guest room, sanctuary, for unhoused newcomers. My refugee neighbor generously gifts a garden bouquet of tea roses and sweet peas “just because.” Beauty woos this broken heart.



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BREATH PRAYER

Inhale:

Peacemaking Savior

Exhale:

I breathe in beauty,

I exhale hope



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AUTHOR BIO

Jamie Witt Alm

Jamie Alm learns, lives and builds community with her family in southeast Seattle while running an amateur bed and breakfast. She is trained in Speech Language Therapy and Narrative Medicine and loves all things related to words and story.



HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONALS

Tuesday



SEEN
by Lin Elizabeth Preiss



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SCRIPTURE READING

The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written,

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."

Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.



SCRIPTURE READING

For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength. Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God. He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, in order that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

1 Corinthians 1:18-31 NRSV



REFLECTION

Sometimes the contradictions are unbearable. Powers that oppress, systems that deceive us, and a sense of hopelessness.

When we come to the cross of Christ, the contradictions do not end, but there is hope that comes alive, although we only see it in hindsight. So much we only see in hindsight.

We proclaim Christ crucified, which is such an apparent defeat. But there, on the cross, the powers and wisdom of this world that oppress us and operate against shalom and flourishing are disarmed, exposed, and defeated.



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REFLECTION

When we see Jesus Christ, who is our life, true wisdom, power, justice, and reconciler, we are also confronted. Where is our pride and glory? How does the cross of Christ root us and redefine our own suffering?

On the cross, which we also suffer, life is made possible. A life for all, a power marked by love redefined, and wisdom for good living.

The message of the cross might seem foolish, but it is where the course of history is subverted. We all join at the cross and no one stands above anyone else.

The course of history has been altered.



BREATH PRAYER

Inhale:

Wounded Healer

Exhale:

**Give me eyes to see
the truth**



AUTHOR BIO

Alejandra Ortiz

Alejandra Ortiz lives in Tijuana, Mexico with her husband Abdiel and their daughters Erandi and Ayari. She and her family are active in a church that serves as a shelter for migrants in Tijuana. Alejandra often writes and speaks on issues related to the Bible, theology, culture, missions, motherhood and spirituality. Alejandra serves with the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES) and is part-time PhD student at the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies.



HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONALS

Wednesday



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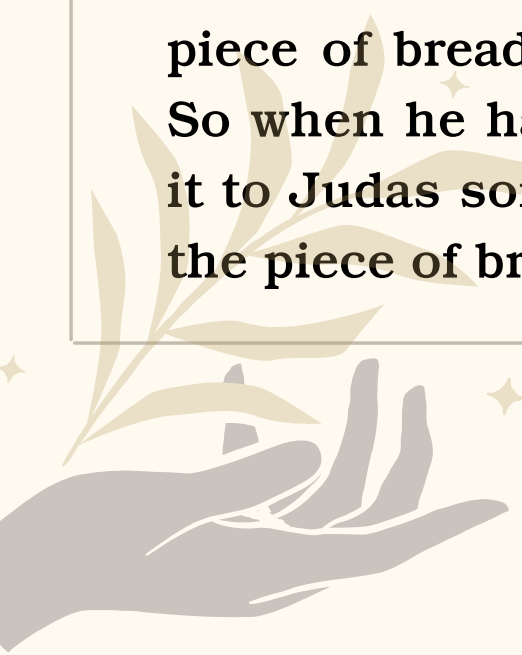
SCRIPTURE READING

At supper with his friends, Jesus was troubled in spirit, and declared, "Very truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me."

The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he was speaking. One of his disciples-- the one whom Jesus loved-- was reclining next to him; Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking.

So while reclining next to Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?"

Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." So when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot. After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him.



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SCRIPTURE READING

Jesus said to him, "Do quickly what you are going to do." Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. Some thought that, because Judas had the common purse, Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the festival"; or, that he should give something to the poor. So, after receiving the piece of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once."

John 13:21-32 NRSV

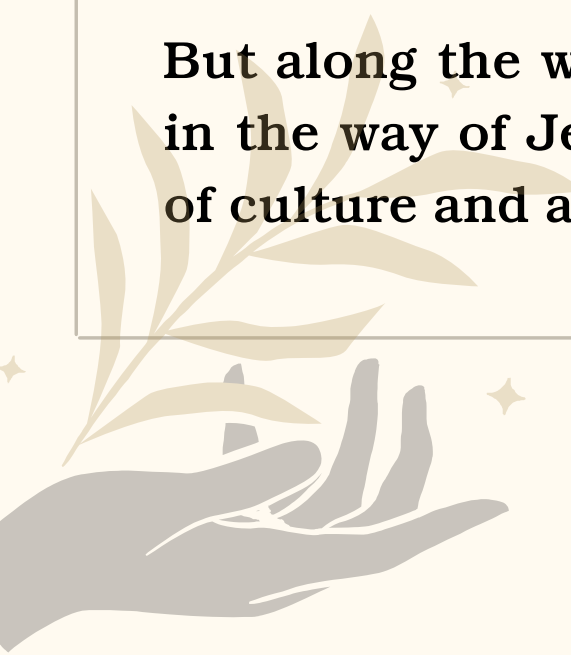


REFLECTION

Each of us wriggles into this world from our mother's womb crying out to be seen and to be cherished. Through blurry, puffy eyes, we fight through harsh fluorescent lights in search of the eyes of the one who gave us life. And in those eyes—and in the warmth of our mother's embrace—we experience our first touch of belonging.

As we grow and align our lives with Jesus the Christ, it's no longer enough to just belong; we want to experience the solidarity of a beloved community who is bringing a little more of heaven to earth.

But along the way we discover that following God in the way of Jesus may put us in the crosshairs of culture and at odds with our community.

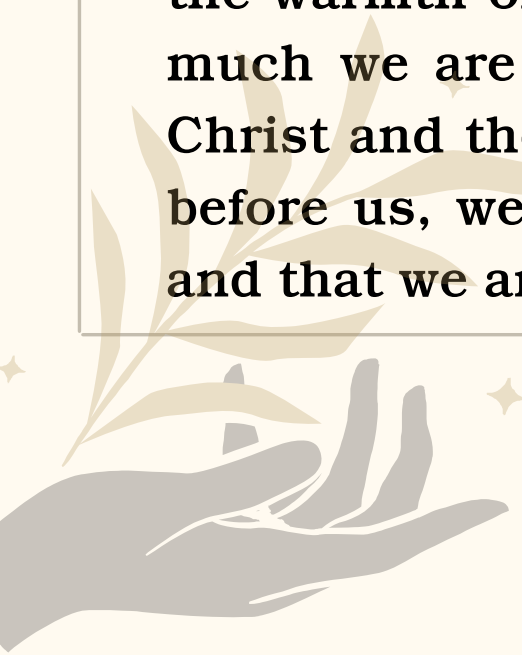


REFLECTION

In the blink of an eye we may feel misunderstood, distrusted, and disowned.

There is so much beauty in Holy Week, but there is ugliness within it too. It's the betrayal of Jesus by the beloved community that weighs most heavily on my soul and surely broke Jesus' heart.

Many of you have felt betrayed. You've shed tears of pain. But even in this place of sorrow, God invites us to experience the unimaginable: the rebirth of joy. Through our blurry, puffy eyes, we seek out the eyes of the One who gave us life. In the warmth of Jesus' embrace we remember how much we are cherished. And in the presence of Christ and the beloved community who has gone before us, we are reminded that we truly belong and that we are not—nor ever will be—alone.



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BREATH PRAYER

Inhale:

Jesus

Exhale:

**I am afraid,
but I open my hands**



AUTHOR BIO

Rob Yackely



As the President and Executive Director of Thresholds Community, Rob Yackely is a seasoned leader with a diverse background in community development and mentorship. Prior to founding Thresholds, he served as the lead architect and director of NieuCommunities, a global collective fostering the growth of emerging leaders, as detailed in his co-authored book, “Thin Places.” With over 30 years of experience as a certified coach across various cultures and religious traditions, Rob specializes in guiding leaders and churches through challenges towards realizing their spiritual visions. Embracing an apostolic approach, he is particularly passionate about supporting leaders in reimagining their roles in post-church landscapes. Rob holds a Masters of Leadership and Theology from Talbot Seminary and leads a vibrant faith community in downtown San Diego, where he resides with his family.



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HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONALS

Thursday



LOVED
by Lin Elizabeth Preiss

SCRIPTURE READING

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand."



SCRIPTURE READING

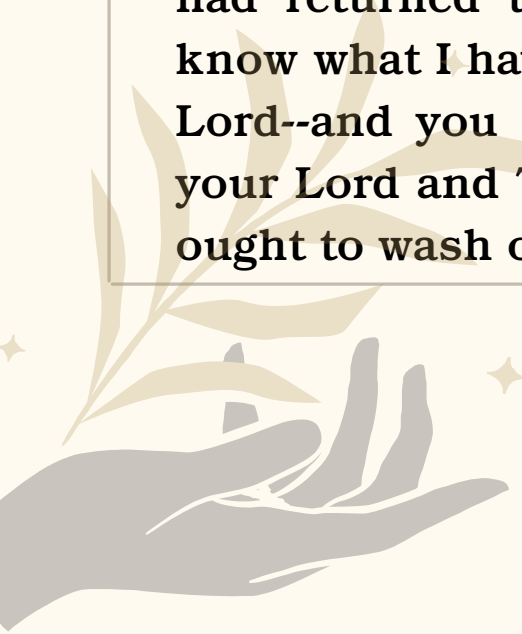
Peter said to him, “You will never wash my feet.”

Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.”

Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!”

Jesus said to him, “One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you.” For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, “Not all of you are clean.”

After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord--and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.



SCRIPTURE READING

For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

“Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

John 13:1-17, 31b-35 NRSV



REFLECTION

In this era of instant and mass communication via social media, many and differing messages proliferate about Jesus, his teachings, and his followers. Positive, negative, and indifferent responses and viewpoints abound. How can Jesus' present-day followers positively engage?

While all Jesus' words are important, giving close attention to his messages/actions during days/hours before his death is crucial. Jesus said, "So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples." (John 13:34-35, NLT)

Yet, too often, our response/engagement is more talking/noise...



REFLECTION

Sharing perspectives (sometimes forcefully), we attempt to persuade/convince others that we are Jesus' disciples/followers. Jesus made clear that his disciples are to love as he loved, and people will know.

Instead of being served by his disciples as their “Lord and Teacher”—Jesus served them and said this was his example to them. (John 13:12-17)

Our individual and collective invitation: we must love each other so tangibly that the broader culture recognizes that we truly follow Jesus' ways, and that loving across societal divides is not only possible, but the necessary outcome.



BREATH PRAYER

Inhale:

When I am afraid to love

Exhale:

**Holy Spirit, give me
a tender heart**



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AUTHOR BIO

Nina Barnes

Nina Barnes is a trained spiritual director and coach with a passion for accompanying others in navigating life. Through Transforming Journey, her spiritual direction and coaching practice, Nina considers it a sacred privilege to help people listen for and respond to invitations from God. She creates space for people to discover purpose & meaning, discern opportunities, work through challenges and conflicts, and develop as leaders. Nina is honored to help others experience and embody love, hope, redemption, and a journey of belovedness.



HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONALS

Friday



ACCUSED
by Lin Elizabeth Preiss

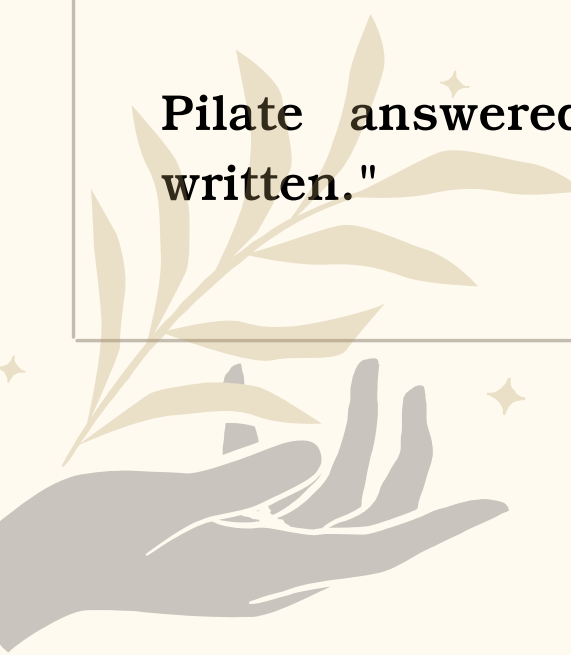


SCRIPTURE READING

So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them.

Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'"

Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written."



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SCRIPTURE READING

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it." This was to fulfill what the scripture says,

"They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots."

And that is what the soldiers did.

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.



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SCRIPTURE READING

When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), "I am thirsty." A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

John 19:16b-30 NRSV



REFLECTION

Only Suffering

There have been many reflections on what is “good” about Good Friday. This is not one of them, for that day was only suffering. The texts for this day describe agony in the garden and suffering on the cross. When Jesus gave up his spirit, even creation knew this was a momentous event—the skies went dark, the earth shook, and the rocks split. There was only suffering.

My great-grandmother was the sole survivor in her family when the 7th Cavalry surrounded freezing, starving Lakota travelers at Wounded Knee Creek on December 29, 1890. There was such suffering in genocide. We were never meant to survive.



REFLECTION

Only Suffering

When I researched the colonial Boarding School project, I was horrified by the unbearable suffering and murder of Native children by Christian stewards. It was a slower genocide. I cried out to Jesus, where were you? Couldn't anybody see the suffering happening? Now we all see. We see more genocide around the globe and more suffering.

An honest, deep response to suffering is lament. From an indigenous perspective, lament is a kinship responsibility, not a surrender to suffering. Lament is our spirit knowing that suffering is not right, there is more.



BREATH PRAYER

Inhale:

My soul weeps

Exhale:

Yet I know

I am not alone



AUTHOR BIO

Lenore Three Stars

Lenore Three Stars is Oglala Lakota, born on Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, where her father was born. Her mother is Mnicoujou Lakota from the Cheyenne River Reservation, S.D.

Lenore earned her BA from Fort Lewis College in Colorado, completed a civil rights career in Seattle, Washington, and earned an M.A. from Portland Seminary and George Fox University in Oregon. Lenore speaks, writes, and teaches from a Native perspective on decolonizing theology and racial reconciliation.



HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONALS

Saturday



GIVEN
by Lin Elizabeth Preiss

SCRIPTURE READING

Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

John 19:38-42 NRSV



REFLECTION

The Kingdom of God is a plea for his brutalized and broken body. It is tenderly carrying him in your arms and gently wiping away the dirt, and dried sweat and blood—from his hands, and his feet, his wounded torso, his face. The Kingdom of God is rejecting for him a common grave, insisting instead he receives the one you had made for yourself—clean and new. It is compassionate, quiet, and sacred service, for his mother, and for the ones with only tears left to give.

We'll go on to tell of Christ crucified and risen. We'll seek him in white-walled sanctuaries and high-ceiling cathedrals. We'll find him in streets and hospitals and prisons, in breaking bread and in prayers, in all the places he told us he'd be.

In these interminable moments, though, the Kingdom of God is waiting—together.



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BREATH PRAYER

Inhale:

Waiting, Waiting, Waiting

Exhale:

Hoping, Hoping, Hoping



AUTHOR BIO

Rev. Hope A.J. Christensen

The Rev. Hope A.J. Christensen is a priest serving in the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, and the CEO of Faith Leaders for Ending Gun Violence, where she works to mobilize, strengthen, and partner with faith communities to address gun violence. She holds degrees from the University of North Carolina Greensboro and Bexley Seabury Seminary.



ARTIST BIO

Lin Elizabeth Preiss

Lin Elizabeth Preiss is a theological artist and hospital chaplain living in Spokane, WA. She received her BFA in visual art from the University of Colorado and a Masters in Art and Theology from Fuller Seminary where she expanded to mixed media and sculpture. Lin utilizes art as a means of "disturbing the comfortable and "comforting the disturbed". As an alumni of Global Immersion's Journey of Hope leadership cohort, Lin seeks peacemaking through deeper connection with our communities, ourselves, and our faith through art and storytelling. Connect with her at linelizabeth.com.



BREATH PRAYERS BY

Osheta Moore



Pastor, speaker, mother, wife: Osheta Moore is passionate about peacemaking, racial reconciliation, and community development in the urban core. Osheta (pronounced o-she-da, and no, it doesn't mean anything, she says, "my dad just made it up") serves as Pastor of Community life at Roots Covenant Church alongside her husband. Osheta is passionate about equipping the church to be everyday peacemakers. She is the author of "Shalom Sistas," an invitation to women to practice the Hebraic concept of Shalom in their everyday lives, and her most recent book and "Dear White Peacemakers," is a love letter to White Christians on their anti-racism peacemaking journey. She is also completing her two-year program to become a Spiritual Director so that she can help equip peacemakers with practices and prayers for the journey. Osheta has "flying in a hot-air balloon" at the top of her bucket list, and she is firmly convinced that everything is better after a nap. Follow Osheta on Instagram @oshetamoore for encouragement to practice everyday peacemaking and invitations for White Peacemakers on their journey towards anti-racism.



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