



THE POPE'S MONTHLY PRAYER INTENTION FOR APRIL 2019

For doctors and their humanitarian collaborators in war zones, who risk their lives to save the lives of others.



Monday, April 1, 2019

Know that God is present with you and ready to converse.

“Lord, let me find you in the darkness of the world and even within my own darkness. You are the Light of the world.”

Read the gospel: John 9:1-3, 6-7, 13-41 (Jn 9:1-41)

As Jesus walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. . . .” When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then the man went and washed and came back able to see. . . .

His neighbors brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, “He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.” Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” He said, “He is a prophet.”

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” His parents answered, “We know that this is our

son, and that he was born blind; but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out.

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him." Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him. Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind." Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

Notice what you think and feel as you read the gospel.

This gospel reading is a study of human nature: All are in the dark, in different ways. The disciples don't understand Jesus. The blind man doesn't see anything. His parents can't explain his healing. The Pharisees, blinded by their theology, cannot see past the fact that Jesus breaks the Sabbath according to their laws. Meanwhile, the man restored to sight believes in Jesus, the Messiah.

Pray as you are led for yourself and others.

“Lord, though all the world be wrong, you are right. I believe in you and worship you. As we have a personal relationship, I pray the same for others, especially those in deepest darkness . . .” (Continue in your own words.)

Listen to Jesus.

I cannot do my work in those who deny their sins, beloved disciple. Turn from sin and seek forgiveness, and you will know my joy. What else is Jesus saying to you?

Ask God to show you how to live today.

“What sacrifice can I make today to show my love for you, my gratitude that you are with me, Savior? Amen.”

Tuesday, April 2, 2019

Know that God is present with you and ready to converse.

Lord of heaven and earth, stir up my heart to receive your Word today.

Read the gospel: John 5:1–9a, 14–16 (Jn 5:1–16).

After this there was a festival of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. In these lay many invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed. One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, “Do you want to be made well?” The sick man answered him, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me.” Jesus said to him, “Stand up, take your mat and walk.” At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk. . . .

Later Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, “See, you have been made well! Do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you.” The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. Therefore the Jews started persecuting Jesus, because he was doing such things on the sabbath.

Notice what you think and feel as you read the gospel.

On this Sabbath, Jesus tells the paralyzed man to take up his mat and walk, and the man does so. Some Jews tell the man that it is unlawful for him to carry his mat on the Sabbath, and these Jews start persecuting Jesus for working on the Sabbath.

Pray as you are led for yourself and others.

“How narrow is the human heart, Lord! How easily we reject your free ways of love and allow ourselves to be imprisoned by human rules and expectations. Free us from this sin . . .” (Continue in your own words.)

Listen to Jesus.

If you offer yourself to act upon my love, you, too, will meet opposition. But I will be with you, and I will work through you, dear disciple. What else is Jesus saying to you?

Ask God to show you how to live today.

“Lord, all I ask is to walk in your grace, following you, doing small acts of love. Amen.”

Wednesday, April 3, 2019

Know that God is present with you and ready to converse.

“Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit you are One with your Son, Jesus, who is the everlasting Word. Let me join you in your love.”

Read the gospel: John 5:17–24 (Jn 5:17–30).

But Jesus answered them, “My Father is still working, and I also am working.” For this reason the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because he was not only breaking the sabbath, but was also calling God his own Father, thereby making himself equal to God.

Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise. The Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing; and he will show him greater works than these, so that you will be astonished. Indeed, just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whomsoever he wishes. The Father judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son, so that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Anyone who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. Very truly, I

tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgment, but has passed from death to life.”

Notice what you think and feel as you read the gospel.

Some of the Jews want to kill Jesus, not just because he breaks the Sabbath but because he makes himself equal to God by healing, forgiving, raising the dead, and proclaiming that in the end he will judge all humanity. Yet Jesus teaches that he is one with the Father; he does only the Father’s will.

Pray as you are led for yourself and others.

“I can imagine how stunned people were to hear your words, Lord. You spoke the truth, but it was too much for many to take in. Open my spirit to humility to receive and believe the truth, your perfect unity with the Father, and your life-giving authority . . .” (Continue in your own words.)

Listen to Jesus.

My work of redemption is both complete and still in process. I did not come to give temporary relief to a fallen people; I came to raise all who trust in me to eternal life with God. Let me work in you, beloved. What else is Jesus saying to you?

Ask God to show you how to live today.

“Jesus, make your saving power real in me. Let me extend it by your grace and guidance to someone else today. I am grateful to you, Blessed Lord. Amen.”

Thursday, April 4, 2019

Know that God is present with you and ready to converse.

“Word of God, Savior, Jesus, let me hear your voice today.”

Read the gospel: John 5:31–38 (Jn 5:31–47).

Jesus said, “If I testify about myself, my testimony is not true. There is another who testifies on my behalf, and I know that his testimony to me is true. You sent messengers to John, and he testified to the truth. Not that I accept such human testimony, but I say these things so that you may be saved. He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. But I have a testimony greater than John’s. The works that the Father has given me to complete, the very works that

I am doing, testify on my behalf that the Father has sent me. And the Father who sent me has himself testified on my behalf. You have never heard his voice or seen his form, and you do not have his word abiding in you, because you do not believe him whom he has sent.”

Notice what you think and feel as you read the gospel.

Jesus points out the things that identify him as the Messiah, which are not his own evidence but God’s. John the Baptist, the mighty works Jesus did, and the scriptures all testify that Jesus is the Messiah. He is telling us that faith is built on the testimony of those we trust. The Jewish elders refused to trust Jesus, so they refused to accept God’s own testimony, which was revealed in Jesus’ powerful ministry.

Pray as you are led for yourself and others.

“Lord, you are faithful and good. In all matters, I will trust you. I entrust to you especially these . . .” (Continue in your own words.)

Listen to Jesus.

Beloved disciple, trust in me, learn from me, and I will show you the very face of God. What else is Jesus saying to you?

Ask God to show you how to live today.

“Jesus, Word of God, let my actions today bear witness to your goodness and bring you glory. Amen.”

Friday, April 5, 2019

Know that God is present with you and ready to converse.

“One God, I am before you, in awe at your wonderful works in the universe, in history, in the salvation of your people. Teach me by your Word.”

Read the gospel: John 7:1–2, 10, 25–30.

After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He did not wish to go about in Judea because the Jews were looking for an opportunity to kill him. Now the Jewish festival of Booths was near. . . .

But after his brothers had gone to the festival, then he also went, not publicly but as it were in secret. . . .

Now some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, “Is not this the man whom they are trying to kill? And here he is, speaking openly, but they say nothing to him! Can it be that the authorities really know that

this is the Messiah? Yet we know where this man is from; but when the Messiah comes, no one will know where he is from." Then Jesus cried out as he was teaching in the temple, "You know me, and you know where I am from. I have not come on my own. But the one who sent me is true, and you do not know him. I know him, because I am from him, and he sent me." Then they tried to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him, because his hour had not yet come.

Notice what you think and feel as you read the gospel.

As the people of Jerusalem speculate on Jesus' identity as the Messiah, Jesus states in the temple that he has been sent by God, whom they do not know. Jesus is fearless, confident in and surrendered to the will of God, who sent him. They try to arrest him but cannot, because it is God's will that Jesus should continue his ministry at this time; Jesus' arrest will come later.

Pray as you are led for yourself and others.

"Lord, I, too, give myself to your timing and the events you have destined in my life. Let me be true to you and embrace your will . . ." (Continue in your own words.)

Listen to Jesus.

It was my glory to be crucified in shame before men and women, as I did it for love. My Cross is also your glory, dear disciple. Take up your own cross in love and follow me to glory. What else is Jesus saying to you?

Ask God to show you how to live today.

"Let me make a small or great sacrifice in love today, Lord. Let it be to glorify you. I praise the way of the Cross, Jesus. Thank you for teaching me. Amen."

Saturday, April 6, 2019

Know that God is present with you and ready to converse.

"Lord, as I come into your presence let all doubt and disputation die in me, and let me receive the truth of your Word."

Read the gospel: John 7:40–53.

When they heard Jesus' words, some in the crowd said, "This is really the prophet." Others said, "This is the Messiah." But some asked, "Surely the Messiah does not come from Galilee, does he? Has not the scripture

said that the Messiah is descended from David and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David lived?" So there was a division in the crowd because of him. Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.

Then the temple police went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, "Why did you not arrest him?" The police answered, "Never has anyone spoken like this!" Then the Pharisees replied, "Surely you have not been deceived too, have you? Has any one of the authorities or of the Pharisees believed in him? But this crowd, which does not know the law—they are accursed." Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus before, and who was one of them, asked, "Our law does not judge people without first giving them a hearing to find out what they are doing, does it?" They replied, "Surely you are not also from Galilee, are you? Search and you will see that no prophet is to arise from Galilee."

Notice what you think and feel as you read the gospel.

The people of Jerusalem speak from partial knowledge, and they form their opinions based on self-interest, not regard for the truth. The Pharisees condemn the crowd's ignorance of the law, but Nicodemus points out that they themselves disregard the law in their judgment of Jesus.

Pray as you are led for yourself and others.

"Lord, I can be swept into confusion by all the arguments of my own day. My knowledge is partial, my prejudices hold sway, and I am distracted from having a pure encounter with you. Let me know you and worship you with all my heart . . ." (Continue in your own words.)

Listen to Jesus.

My beloved servant, I give you my heart as you have given me yours. By faith you see me, by love you know me. What else do you ask of me today? What else is Jesus saying to you?

Ask God to show you how to live today.

"Thank you for your wonderful love for me, Lord. Let nothing ever come between us. I humbly ask that I may radiate your love to others today. Amen."

Sunday, April 7, 2019

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Know that God is present with you and ready to converse.

“Jesus, teach me just judgment by your Word.”

Read the gospel: John 8:1-11.

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, they said to him, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus straightened up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” She said, “No one, sir.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.”

Notice what you think and feel as you read the gospel.

When the scribes and Pharisees bring a woman caught in adultery to Jesus, he teaches them mercy and shows their own sinfulness. In obedience to the law of Moses, they would stone her, but Jesus reminds them they are all sinners. Then Jesus forgives the woman and exhorts her to sin no more.

Pray as you are led for yourself and others.

“Lord, you have fulfilled the law of Moses with plentiful love and mercy. Thank you. Let me love and forgive someone I have been judging . . .”
(Continue in your own words.)

Listen to Jesus.

I am glad for your sake that you see that practicing love and mercy are the ways to please God and grow in holiness. You will find happiness in this way. Walk close to me. What else is Jesus saying to you?

Ask God to show you how to live today.

"I resolve to walk with you today, Lord. Use me as you will. I want to serve and please you, but I cannot unless you work through me. Amen."

Monday, April 8, 2019

Know that God is present with you and ready to converse.

"Lord, write on my heart your laws of love. I thank you for your presence here now."

Read the gospel: John 8:12–20.

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." Then the Pharisees said to him, "You are testifying on your own behalf; your testimony is not valid." Jesus answered, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid because I know where I have come from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. You judge by human standards; I judge no one. Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is valid; for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. In your law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is valid. I testify on my own behalf, and the Father who sent me testifies on my behalf." Then they said to him, "Where is your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also." He spoke these words while he was teaching in the treasury of the temple, but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.

Notice what you think and feel as you read the gospel.

While the Pharisees are scrupulous in adhering to the Law of Moses, Jesus encourages them to look to the greater law that comes from God, the Father.

Pray as you are led for yourself and others.

"Lord, my heart is quick to judge others who do not follow the letter of the law. By your Spirit, let me seek your forgiveness and let me value obedience to those who honor your higher law." (Continue in your own words.)

Listen to Jesus.

Beloved, you are right to seek holiness by my Spirit, for only in God is it possible to achieve true obedience. What else is Jesus saying to you?

Ask God to show you how to live today.

“Open my eyes and mind that I may see how I can be judgmental. Lord, show me how to put my judgments far from me, case by case. All praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.”

Tuesday, April 9, 2019

Know that God is present with you and ready to converse.

“Master of the universe, Holy Trinity, One God, I cannot take you in. Take me into yourself. Capture me by your Word.”

Read the gospel: John 8:21-30.

Again Jesus said to them, “I am going away, and you will search for me, but you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come.” Then the Jews said, “Is he going to kill himself? Is that what he means by saying, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come’?” He said to them, “You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins, for you will die in your sins unless you believe that I am he.” They said to him, “Who are you?” Jesus said to them, “Why do I speak to you at all? I have much to say about you and much to condemn; but the one who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him.” They did not understand that he was speaking to them about the Father. So Jesus said, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will realize that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own, but I speak these things as the Father instructed me. And the one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to him.” As he was saying these things, many believed in him.

Notice what you think and feel as you read the gospel.

Jesus is thinking of his Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension. He exhorts his listeners to believe in him lest they die in their sins. He tells them they will realize who he is when they lift him up on the Cross.