

memoration of the happy, healthy and carefree life which our first parents, Adam and Eve, enjoyed in the earthly Paradise. This commemoration reminds us of the Christian teaching that man was originally created in a happy state of life, and is destined to eternal and endless happiness by his Creator. The ugly thing which comes between man and his happiness is sin, which is disobedience to God's laws, and which is the greatest evil on earth. Sin or disobedience to God's commandments deprived our first parents, according to the Bible, of their natural happiness. Sin is the only thing which deprives us from our supernatural or spiritual happiness which we shall enjoy in heavenly Paradise.

Come then, into this Lenten season with your imagination and feelings unconfined. Become a disciple for a time. Let your Bible reading and personal meditations take you to 'a time and place that are no more but will ever be.'

It is suggested that you keep a journal for the Lenten period. You will want to respond to some of the readings and to record your thoughts and feelings as you move through the next few weeks.

As personally as possible, put yourself in the mood of the times about which you will be reading. Put yourself in each scene, take part in each event. Let the scriptures come alive in your imagination and in your heart.

So now, let us begin our Lenten Journey of Remembrance.

MONDAY: DAY 1: In some religious traditions, palms left from the previous year's Palm Sunday celebration are burned and the ashes used as an obvious reminder of the events of Holy Week. Whether or not your tradition dictates the use of ashes, let your heart remember the reason and need for recalling those events. Read John 12:12-16.

TUESDAY: DAY 2: It begins with John. Read Mark 1:1-8. You hear a man talking in the wilderness who is dressed strangely. It's crazy talk, but intriguing. Who is this man who eats locusts and makes such a case for the one who is coming? In your journal, write what John said in verses 7 and 8.

WEDNESDAY: DAY 3: You were there. You witnessed this event (Mark 1:9-12) What did you hear? Was it the thunder? (Music, a whirlwind) What was it like to see Jesus and John together? Read Luke 1:36-45. What is the significance of this first meeting between Jesus and John? Write your thoughts in your journal.

THURSDAY: DAY 4: You are called to follow. Read Mark 1:14-19 and Mark 3:13-19. Identify with one of the men or place yourself in the crowd. Keep this identity during your Lenten study. Let your imagination take you where it will as you watch Jesus' ministry unfold. In your journal, write a short prayer for understanding.

FRIDAY: DAY 5: Mark 1:21-28. You are following a man

who teaches with new authority. He has the power to call evil spirits from tormented people. How do you feel about that? If you follow this man, do you worry about what traditional believers or your friends or family will say? Can you give yourself totally to his way of belief? How is it in your life today? Do you follow this man? Write your feelings in your journal.

SATURDAY: DAY 6: Mark 1:40-45. When Jesus healed the leper, you witnessed the event. How did you feel seeing a miracle occur? Have you or has anyone you know had a miraculous healing? Was Jesus asked for intervention? Was he given credit for the healing? Imagine, now, telling about such a healing. What reactions would you expect from those with whom you shared this happening? Write this in your journal.

SUNDAY: DAY 7: Mark 2:1-5. You helped with this event. You held one of the ropes. Your faith is growing, yet when you heard Jesus say "your sins are forgiven", you had mixed feelings. It is one thing to have the power to heal a broken body, another to have the power to forgive sins. In your journal, write your feelings. End with a prayer for understanding and help for today.

MONDAY: DAY 8: Mark 2:13-17. You were in the crowd following Jesus. You saw him stop and call Levi, the tax collector. No one in that time liked tax collectors very much. When you saw Jesus go to Levi's house to eat with him and other unpopular people, you joined the crowd in asking him how he could do such a thing. You hear Jesus' answer. Write it in your journal (verse 17).

TUESDAY: DAY 9: Mark 2:23-28. When the Pharisees accused Jesus of breaking the Law of the Sabbath, he reminded them of the time that David ate Holy Bread (read I Samuel 21:1-6). Then he made an inflammatory statement. Write the statement in your journal, verses 27-28.

WEDNESDAY: DAY 10: Mark 3:1-16. You watched and listened as Jesus showed his power and his compassion. You also saw and heard the Pharisees talking to Herod's men. You knew that meant trouble ahead. Have you, in your life today, tried to help someone avoid coming trouble by telling them of something you had seen or heard? Or do you prefer not to get involved? Write your feelings in your journal.

THURSDAY: DAY 11: Mark 3:31-35. Jesus makes a famous statement in this passage. Can you accept it as your own belief? How can you apply it in your life today? In your journal, write the names of three people outside your own family whom you will try to treat as brother, sister, or mother in the spirit of Jesus' statement.

FRIDAY: DAY 12: Matthew 13:10-17. Jesus explains the purpose of the parables. Read these verses carefully. Do you think that Jesus used parables to deliberately

confuse his hearers or to separate true understanders from those who did not understand his message and mission? Read Matthew 13:34-35. Write Jesus' answer in your journal.

SATURDAY: DAY 13: Matthew 13:24-30. Read this parable. What does it mean to you? How would you explain it to a listener? Read Matthew 13:36-43 for Jesus' explanation. Have you 'had ears' to hear and are you prepared to do as he says? Record your feelings and your answer in your journal: add a prayer for help on your journey.

SUNDAY: DAY 14: Matthew 13:47-50. This parable is similar to the one you read yesterday. Jesus used images which his hearers could understand (fishing, farming, shepherding, etc.). In your journal, write a short parable similar to the ones you have read. Use images from your life or from your work place.

MONDAY: DAY 15: Matthew 13:53-58. You are continuing your Journey with Jesus. You follow him to Nazareth. You hear his own home town people reject him. What would you say to him? Write the statement Jesus made (verse 57) in your journal. Have you known or heard of other persons who met similar rejection in their home towns or countries. List them in your journal.

TUESDAY: DAY 16: Matthew 14:22-33. This is a record of one of the most famous events of Jesus' ministry. Peter acted very much like many of today's disciples probably would. He showed a great lack of faith. Write a prayer in your journal asking for continuing and undiminishing faith in Jesus as your leader.

WEDNESDAY: DAY 17: Mark 7:1-13. Jesus tells the Pharisees that they are the ones disobeying God by honoring God with words but not with deeds. In your journal, write of instances in your knowledge where a person or persons claimed to be doing God's work while ignoring urgent needs right in front of them. Promise God and yourself that you will, for today, live His word in your deeds.

THURSDAY: DAY 18: Luke 6:20-26. You have the benefit of having heard these words many times. If you can, imagine hearing them for the first time. Can you imagine a person like Jesus telling you to be happy under the circumstances outlined? Are you able to remember these words when you have difficulties in your life? Write the essence of the Beatitudes in your journal.

FRIDAY: DAY 19: Luke 6:27-36. This is one of the most difficult lessons in the entire Bible to remember and obey. Can you recall an instance in your life where you truly obeyed this commandment? What are the circumstances? What happened as a result of your actions? Do you act this way as often as the occasion requires? In your journal, write a remembrance of any of these occasions. Pray for strength to do Jesus' work every day.

SATURDAY: DAY 20: Luke 6:35-40. Jesus is giving you a hard path to follow. Not allowing ourselves to judge others is exceptionally difficult since we are usually quick to see their faults and shortcomings, often ignoring our own. Key phrases here will help to keep us from judging others. Reread verses 38-40. Write them in your journal.

SUNDAY: DAY 21: Matthew 15:10-20. Once again, Jesus talks against the teachings of the Pharisees. He claims that a person is not defiled (made unclean) by eating certain foods or preparing improperly to eat a meal. His idea of 'unclean' is different. What is it? In your journal, write of instances you or someone whom you know would have been unclean by Jesus' standards. Pray that you may be free of unclean thoughts today.

MONDAY: DAY 22: Mark 8:27-30. You are there. You are following Jesus and his disciples to Caesarea Philippi. You heard the conversation recorded in these verses. Peter seemed so sure and Jesus accepts his answer as fact. What do you think? Have you accepted Peter's statement as your own? Write your feelings in your journal.

TUESDAY: DAY 23: Luke 9:21-27. Put yourself in these verses. In your imagination and in your heart, hear Jesus saying these things. How hard it must have been to hear him say that he would soon die; but how much more incredible to hear him say that he would rise again on the third day! Read verses 23-26 again very carefully. How do you explain this passage? What will you do today to take up the cross and follow Jesus? Write it in your journal.

WEDNESDAY: DAY 24: Matthew 17:1-13. This is one of the most moving events recorded in the Gospels. Jesus referred to John the Baptist as Elijah returned to announce the coming of the Messiah. Read about John's death in Matthew 14:1-12. What do you think of persons who claim to have visions or to hear God? Do you know of modern parallels to the Matthew 14 story? Record your thoughts.

THURSDAY: DAY 25: Matthew 18:1-5. Jesus taught a great but perplexing lesson in these verses. Read them over carefully. In your journal, write your understanding of this lesson. Are you able to be as trusting as a child in your relationship with Jesus? Think about it. In your journal, record reasons why you can or cannot put your full trust in him.

FRIDAY: DAY 26: Luke 10:1-12. Does the town or city where you live welcome 'disciples'? How do people there treat those who claim to be spreading the word of God? How do you react to them? Do you know anyone who has taken Jesus' directions literally, going out with no provisions at all? Could you do it? Write your thoughts in your journal.

SATURDAY: DAY 27: Luke 10:25-37. These verses record one of Jesus' most famous parables which you

have heard many times. With which of the characters do you identify? the injured one? the ignorers? or the helper? In your experience, have you come up against this situation in any form? What did you do? Do you believe that we could eliminate crime and violence if everyone followed Jesus' teachings? Are you able to promote his ideas where you live? (verse 27). What can you do *today* to spread this word? Tell your journal.

SUNDAY: DAY 28: Mark 12:13-17. Jesus' wisdom is evident in his answer to the Pharisees here. How do *you* decide what you give to God? What part of you and your goods belong to God? As today's disciples, how close can you come to living as the first disciples did with nothing of their own, trusting God to provide? Since all we are and have belong to the Creator, how can we acknowledge this dependence? Write your thoughts and answers in your journal.

MONDAY: DAY 29: Matthew 6:5-15. Read verses 5-9 very carefully. Then read 10-15 as if for the first time. Close your eyes and try this prayer with total concentration. Write in your journal any new insights or feelings which come to you.

TUESDAY: DAY 30: Mark 10:35-45. Jesus explains to James and John one of the hardest lessons we all must learn. To 'win' and be first in God's sight, we must humble ourselves enough to lose and be last. We are chosen not to be served, but to serve. How would you explain this to a child or a person who is 'win' oriented? Write your answer in your journal.

WEDNESDAY: DAY 31: Mark 10:46-52. This healing was only one of many which you witnessed as you followed Jesus' journey. Skim the first ten chapters of Mark and document the different people Jesus touched in a healing way. Write words of thanksgiving in your journal for Jesus' healing ministry. Try to 'heal' someone with words of kindness today.

THURSDAY: DAY 32: Luke 14:7-14. Jesus teaches about humility in these verses and about hospitality as well. Have you or someone you know invited guests as described in verse 13? What could you do *today* to obey these words and 'do for others' not expecting any returns? Note your response in your journal.

FRIDAY: DAY 33: Luke 19:1-10. You have heard this story many times. Let it take on a new meaning for you now. Put yourself in Zaccheus' place. Jesus has singled you out from the crowd. He has called you in a special way. You must respond. In your life today, could you do as Zaccheus did and give up half of your possessions? What can you do *today* to answer Jesus' call to follow? Write your response in your journal.

SATURDAY: DAY 34: Jesus reveals to the Samaritan woman that he is the Messiah. Read John 4:1-26 and meditate on Jesus' words, "God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth." How do you worship God?

SUNDAY: DAY 35: Versions of the same story are recorded in John 2:13-16, Luke 19:45-46, Mark 11:15-17, and Matthew 21:12-13. Read each passage; put yourself in the scene. With whom do you identify? merchant? moneychanger? follower? child? Are you cheering for Jesus, angry at him, afraid, or just looking on? Let your imagination take you where it will. Describe your feelings in your journal.

MONDAY: DAY 36: Matthew 24:3-14, 29-31. Jesus tells his disciples that he will come again. He describes some of the evils and troubles the world must endure before his return. What are some of those things? What does he promise to those who hold on to their belief in him? Write these things in your journal. Record your feelings.

TUESDAY: DAY 37: Mark 14:3-9. Note the home in which Jesus visited. His host would have been an out-cast. Why? You have heard the story of the woman and her gift many times. How different would the story have been if the woman had offered money? Do you think her action then would have been recorded in the Gospels? In the same kind of situation, would you be more likely to offer money? In your life, in your own community, are there ways in which you can do for others in the spirit of the woman who anointed Christ? Record your answers and feelings?

WEDNESDAY: DAY 38: Jesus heals the blind man. TODAY: Read John 9:1-41 and meditate on how Jesus is the giver of sight and "has opened your eyes," helped you to see, and changed you.

THURSDAY: DAY 39: Jesus claims to be the "good shepherd" who lays down his life for his "sheep." Read John 10:1-42 and meditate on the meaning of Jesus' death in your life.

FRIDAY: DAY 40: Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. Read John 11:1-57 and meditate on God's restoration of life through Jesus.

Revised from *A Study Guide For Lent* by Janice Bacon

