

LENT DEVOTIONAL

PRAYERS OF SOLIDARITY

INTRODUCTION

“All In: Luke 3:21” by Drew Jackson¹

Solidarity is a beautiful thing.
Jumping into the same waters
as sisters and brothers
is harder than I realized.

No performative show,
this is incarnation-
baptism into human skin.
This is what it looks like to be all in.

This reflection guide can be used alongside the 2023 sermon series, “Warning Signs”, or on its own. The season of Lent invites us into an honest reflection on our own mortality and limitations. Some of these we experience as a natural part of being human. However, there are also ways in which we and others suffer because of systemic issues that oppress and marginalize as a means of controlling power. In this Lenten season, the intent of this guide is to help us engage prayerfully as a practice of solidarity. Rev. Dominique Gilliard, Director of Racial Righteousness and Reconciliation for the Love Mercy Do Justice (LMDJ) initiative of the Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC), explains solidarity as a choice to enter into the lived experience with the head, heart, and body, *“we choose solidarity because we are one interconnected Body and because our Lord and Savior first chose solidarity with us in the incarnation. In solidarity, we strive towards realizing Cesar Chávez’s vision, that “we can bring the day when children will learn from their earliest days that being fully man and fully woman means to give one’s life to the liberation of the brother who suffers.”*²

Solidarity doesn’t mean taking on someone else’s story or experience and co-opting it as your own personal struggle. It is a practice of humility in continual learning and giving of your time and energy for the sake of the thriving of the entire body of Christ. Solidarity takes place in one-on-one relationships, in community, and in prayer as we intentionally seek to expand our understanding beyond our personal lived experience.

Through the reflections that follow, you are encouraged to take an action step out of your time in prayer. Make note of these weekly and share them with a friend or with your small group to help you make changes to bring about liberation now and for future generations.

WEEKLY READING: The readings correlate with the sermon passages for Lent 2023.

Week 1 Mark 8: 27-35
Week 2 Mark 9:42-50
Week 3 Mark 10:17-31
Week 4 Mark 10:32-52
Week 5 Mark 12:1-12
Week 6 Mark 12:28-34
Week 7 (Easter) Mark 16:1-8

WEEKLY RHYTHM: Cycle through the meditations, readings, and prayers three times each week to listen to God and bring your attention to solidarity with these concerns.

- Meditate on the scripture
- Read life story
- Prayerfully consider reflection questions
- Conclude with the prayer(s) provided

¹ Jackson, Drew E., and Jon Batiste. *God Speaks through Wombs: Poems on God’s Unexpected Coming*. InterVarsity Press, 2021.

² <https://ccda.org/dominique-gilliard/>

WEEK 1

MARK 8:27-35

PROCLAIMING JESUS WITH ASSURANCE, FAITH & CONFIDENCE

27 Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, “Who do people say I am?” 28 They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.” 29 “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Messiah.”

30 Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him. 31 He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. 32 He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 33 But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. “Get behind me, Satan!” he said. “You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.” 34 Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 35 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. 36 What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? 37 Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? 38 If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels.”

LIFE STORY: [Saint Maximillian Kolbe](#) followed Jesus with calm conviction even when trading places with a condemned man in Auschwitz.

CONVERSATIONAL PRAYER: Dialogue with God about the space of solidarity you are holding in this session. Use words, spoken or written, draw, sing, or move your body as ways of engaging/expressing these prayer thoughts, feelings, and questions.

- Give thanks for Saint Maximillian Kolbe’s life. What from their story stands out to you? What gives you encouragement and strength?
- What challenges you?

- Does anything in their story prompt you to desire to live, love, act, and relate differently than you have before?
- Prayerfully hold a posture of awareness of God’s presence with you. In that awareness, consider what a faithful response is for you out of this time of prayerful solidarity.
- Pray now for those who are affected by displacement, occupation, and imprisonment- where their bodily freedoms are limited, that their lives would still reflect freedom in Christ.

POETIC PRAYER: “From Behind Bars: Luke 7:18-23” by Drew Jackson³

From behind bars it's hard
to see if the long arc
of the moral universe is bending toward justice.

I have heard reports of a movement,
working to bring change,
but all I can see are COs and prison guards
laughing at talk of abolition.

And I laugh
to cover up the fact
that my hope is waning.
Little light remains in this dungeon.

*Is this really you?
Is this really a God move?
Or should I just keep waiting
with the patience that killed the ancestors?*

³ Jackson, Drew E., and Jon Batiste. *God Speaks through Wombs: Poems on God's Unexpected Coming*. InterVarsity Press, 2021.

WEEK 2

MARK 9:42-50

CARING FOR CHILDREN AND MAKING A WAY FOR THEIR HUMANITY

42 “If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them if a large millstone were hung around their neck and they were thrown into the sea. 43 If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. 45 And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. 47 And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, 48 where “the worms that eat them do not die, and the fire is not quenched.’ 49 Everyone will be salted with fire. 50 “Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt among yourselves, and be at peace with each other.”

LIFE STORY: [Eunice Kennedy Schriver](#) was committed to honoring the independence and dignity of disabled children and founded the Special Olympics.

CONVERSATIONAL PRAYER: Dialogue with God about the space of solidarity you are holding in this session. Use words, spoken or written, draw, sing, or move your body as ways of engaging/expressing these prayer thoughts, feelings, and questions.

- Give thanks for Eunice Kennedy Schriver’s life. What from their story stands out to you? What gives you encouragement and strength?
- What challenges you?
- Does anything in their story prompt you to desire to live, love, act, and relate differently than you have before?
- Prayerfully hold a posture of awareness of God’s presence with you. In that awareness, consider what a faithful response is for you out of this time of prayerful solidarity.

- Pray now for the children whose humanity is not recognized. For the children displaced by war. For those who have been separated from their parents because of political maneuvers. Pray for those in the broken foster care system and situations where they have needed to grow up too fast. Pray for their healing and for systemic change that seeks to care for the whole personhood of children from infancy to adolescence.

SINGING PRAYER: “[Jubilee](#)” By Maveric City Music, performed by the Highrock Choir. [Lyrics](#)

WEEK 3

MARK 10:17-31

LEAVING RICHES (MONEY, POWER, INFLUENCE) TO FOLLOW JESUS' CALL

17 As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” 18 “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. 19 You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.’” 20 “Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.”

21 Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” 22 At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth. 23 Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!” 24 The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”

26 The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, “Who then can be saved?” 27 Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.” 28 Then Peter spoke up, “We have left everything to follow you!” 29 “Truly I tell you,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel 30 will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. 31 But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

LIFE STORY: [Chuck Feeney](#) gave away billions of dollars anonymously and lived a modest humble life.

CONVERSATIONAL PRAYER: Dialogue with God about the space of solidarity you are holding in this session. Use words, spoken or written, draw, sing, or move your body as ways of engaging/expressing these prayer thoughts, feelings, and questions.

- Give thanks for this Chuck Feeney’s life. What from their story stands out to you? What gives you encouragement and strength?
- What challenges you?
- Does anything in their story prompt you to desire to live, love, act, and relate differently than you have before?
- Prayerfully hold a posture of awareness of God’s presence with you. In that awareness, consider what a faithful response is for you out of this time of prayerful solidarity.
- Pray now for those who are captive to their bank accounts. Pray for their freedom and that they will begin to be a part of God’s redemptive work in the world by giving lavishly rather than living lavishly. Pray over your own finances and ask God to show you how your riches may be used to bless others.

SINGING PRAYER: “[Be Thou My Vision](#)” performed by Jason Cross. [Lyrics](#)

WEEK 4

MARK 10:32-52

USING ONE'S LIFE TO SERVE OTHERS, NOT FOR PERSONAL GAIN

32 They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him. 33 “We are going up to Jerusalem,” he said, “and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, 34 who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.”

35 Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. “Teacher,” they said, “we want you to do for us whatever we ask.” 36 “What do you want me to do for you?” he asked. 37 They replied, “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.” 38 “You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said. “Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?” 39 “We can,” they answered. Jesus said to them, “You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, 40 but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.”

41 When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. 42 Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 43 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

46 Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means “son of Timaeus”), was sitting by the roadside begging. 47 When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” 48 Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” 49 Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” So they called to the blind man, “Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling

you.” 50 Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. 51 “What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked him. The blind man said, “Rabbi, I want to see.” 52 “Go,” said Jesus, “your faith has healed you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

LIFE STORY: [John Perkins](#) was a leader in the civil rights movement, a developer of community organizations to support youth in rural and urban areas, and a leader in reconciliation.

CONVERSATIONAL PRAYER: Dialogue with God about the space of solidarity you are holding in this session. Use words, spoken or written, draw, sing, or move your body as ways of engaging/expressing these prayer thoughts, feelings, and questions.

- Give thanks for John Perkin’s life. What from their story stands out to you? What gives you encouragement and strength?
- What challenges you?
- Does anything in their story prompt you to desire to live, love, act, and relate differently than you have before?
- Prayerfully hold a posture of awareness of God’s presence with you. In that awareness, consider what a faithful response is for you out of this time of prayerful solidarity.
- Pray now for those whose civil rights are not honored and respected. Pray for those who are doing the grassroots work to change communities and policies. Pray for God’s provision for those waiting for systemic change and redemptive justice to be seen in their lifetime. Give thanks for all those who have gone before to lay the foundations. Ask God to show you how you can engage in helping to restore justice and equity to your community.

Poetic prayer continued on the next page.

POETIC PRAYER: “Demonized: Luke 7:31-35” By Drew Jackson⁴

It does not seem to matter how we do this work:

with bullhorns or ballpoint pens,
with demure conversation or deafening protest,
with justified rage or joyful resistance.

We will still, somehow, be demonized.

Labeled as rabble-rousers.
Agitators.
Those who stand against the work of God in the world.

It seems to me
the issue is not our methods,
but that we would dare raise our voices
to challenge the status quo.

The problem is that we
have the audacity
to say *woe* to you.

What we do is madness.
We must be crazy
to believe that change could come
to this generation.

So go ahead and frame us.
Continue to blame us for disturbing your false peace.
Keep covering us in your lies.
We will prove to be the wise ones
in the eyes of history.

⁴ Jackson, Drew E., and Jon Batiste. *God Speaks through Wombs: Poems on God's Unexpected Coming*. InterVarsity Press, 2021.

WEEK 5

MARK 12:1-12

STEWARDED THE LAND, TRUSTWORTHY WITH WHAT HAS BEEN GIVEN

12 Jesus then began to speak to them in parables: “A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place. 2 At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. 3 But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed. 4 Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully.

5 He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed. 6 “He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ 7 “But the tenants said to one another, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’ 8 So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard. 9 “What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others. 10 Haven’t you read this passage of Scripture:

“‘The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; 11 the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes?’”

12 Then the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders looked for a way to arrest him because they knew he had spoken the parable against them. But they were afraid of the crowd; so they left him and went away.

LIFE STORY: [Sister Dorothy Stang’s](#) commitment to protecting the people and land of the Amazon rainforest ultimately cost her her life.

CONVERSATIONAL PRAYER: Dialogue with God about the space of solidarity you are holding in this session. Use words, spoken or written, draw, sing, or move your body as ways of engaging/expressing these prayer thoughts, feelings, and questions.

- Give thanks for Sister Dorothy Stang’s life. What from their story stands out to you? What gives you encouragement and strength?
- What challenges you?
- Does anything in their story prompt you to desire to live, love, act, and relate differently than you have before?
- Prayerfully hold a posture of awareness of God’s presence with you. In that awareness, consider what a faithful response is for you out of this time of prayerful solidarity.
- Pray now for those whose suffer sickness, poverty, and death because the land and water have been made toxic by chemicals and irresponsible industry. Pray for indigenous peoples whose land was and is being taken, and with it an erasure of their way of life. Pray for the healing of God’s earthly creation, that it would be stewarded as a gift to protect and respect rather than used and consumed.

PRAYER: “Blessing of the Land or a Garden”⁵

God of the Universe,
you made the heavens and the earth,
so we do not call our home merely “planet earth.”
We call it your creation, a divine mystery,
a gift from your most blessed hand.
The world itself is your miracle.
Bread and vegetables from earth are thus also from heaven.
Help us to see in our daily bread your presence. Upon this garden
may your stars rain down their blessed dust.
May you send rain and sunshine upon our garden and us.
Grant us the humility to touch the humus,
that we might become more human,
that we might mend our rift from your creation,
that we might then know the sacredness of the gift of life,
that we might truly experience life from your hand.

⁵ Claiborne, Shane; Wilson-Hartgrove, Jonathan; Okoro, Enuma. *Common Prayer: A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals* (pp. 561-562). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

For you planted humanity in a garden
and began our resurrection in a garden.
Our blessed memory and hope lie in a garden. Thanks be to God,
who made the world teeming with variety,
of things on the earth, above the earth, and under the earth.
Thanks be to God
for the many kinds of plants, trees, and fruits
that we celebrate.
For the centipedes, ants, and worms,
for the mice, marmots, and bats,
for the cucumbers, tomatoes, and peppers,
we rejoice
that we find ourselves eclipsed by the magnitude
of generosity and mystery.
Thanks be to God.

WEEK 6

MARK 12:28-34

EMBODYING GOD'S PRIORITIES: LOVING GOD & NEIGHBOR AS SELF

28 One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" 29 "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' 31 The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." 32 "Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. 33 To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." 34 When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

LIFE STORY: [Martin de Porres](#) endured ridicule and racism in the pursuit of joining a holy order where he offered radically compassionate care for the sick.

CONVERSATIONAL PRAYER: Dialogue with God about the space of solidarity you are holding in this session. Use words, spoken or written, draw, sing, or move your body as ways of engaging/expressing these prayer thoughts, feelings, and questions.

- Give thanks for Martin de Porres' life. What from their story stands out to you? What gives you encouragement and strength?
- What challenges you?
- Does anything in their story prompt you to desire to live, love, act, and relate differently than you have before?

- Prayerfully hold a posture of awareness of God's presence with you. In that awareness, consider what a faithful response is for you out of this time of prayerful solidarity.
- Pray now for those who encounter obstacles as they follow God because of the hatred of others. For those whose gifts go unnoticed or undeveloped because of the shortsightedness of people in positions of authority. Ask God to help make you aware of whose abilities you discount, limit, or overlook.

PRAYER: "Prayer for Healing"⁶

For Healing In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,
we enjoin your divine mercies.

Lord, why do we suffer?

Why do we hurt?

Shall our only answer

be the eternal abyss of the cosmos?

Shall our only answer be the whirlwind of unknowing
which engulfed Job?

Why do the wicked flourish,

while the righteous waste away?

I am left speechless, left with the words,

"I will trust in you, my God." God, we ask for the sending of your healing Spirit,
who came to us through Jesus, as he breathed upon his disciples.

This Spirit gathered your people,

to be warmed by the fire of divine presence.

By this warmth, may (name of sick person)

be healed and taken into your care. Like the blind man whom Jesus healed,

may (name of sick person) become a sign

of your glory, calling you the Anointed One,

the one who also anoints us and points us to the love of God.

Grants us your healing peace. Amen.

⁶ Claiborne, Shane; Wilson-Hartgrove, Jonathan; Okoro, Enuma. *Common Prayer: A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals* (pp. 555-556). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

WEEK 7

MARK 16:1-8

SEEKING JESUS FAITHFULLY AS WOMEN WHO PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL

16 When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. 2 Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb 3 and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?" 4 But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. 5 As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. 6 "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. 7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'" 8 Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

LIFE STORY: [Phillis Wheatley](#) was a poet and an enslaved person who used her voice and pen to speak against slavery from a Christian perspective.

CONVERSATIONAL PRAYER: Dialogue with God about the space of solidarity you are holding in this session. Use words, spoken or written, draw, sing, or move your body as ways of engaging/expressing these prayer thoughts, feelings, and questions.

- Give thanks for this Phillis Wheatley's life. What from their story stands out to you? What gives you encouragement and strength?
- What challenges you?
- Does anything in their story prompt you to desire to live, love, act, and relate differently than you have before?
- Prayerfully hold a posture of awareness of God's presence with you. In that awareness, consider what a faithful response is for you out of this time of prayerful solidarity.

- Pray now for those who are speaking but not heard. That the world would pay attention to their voices and heed the call to alleviate suffering and injustice. Ask God to make you aware of the voices and stories of women you aren't hearing or listening for.

PRAYER: "A Litany to Honor Women"⁷

We walk in the company of the women who have gone before, mothers of the faith both named and unnamed, testifying with ferocity and faith to the Spirit of wisdom and healing. They are the judges, the prophets, the martyrs, the warriors, poets, lovers, and saints who are near to us in the shadow of awareness, in the crevices of memory, in the landscape of our dreams.

We walk in the company of Deborah, who judged the Israelites with authority and strength.

We walk in the company of Esther, who used her position as queen to ensure the welfare of her people.

We walk in the company of you whose names have been lost and silenced, who kept and cradled the wisdom of the ages.

We walk in the company of the woman with the flow of blood, who audaciously sought her healing and release.

We walk in the company of Mary Magdalene, who wept at the empty tomb until the risen Christ appeared.

We walk in the company of Phoebe, who led an early church in the empire of Rome.

We walk in the company of Perpetua of Carthage, whose witness in the third century led to her martyrdom.

We walk in the company of St. Christina the Astonishing, who resisted death with persistence and wonder.

We walk in the company of Julian of Norwich, who wed imagination and theology, proclaiming, "All shall be well."

⁷ Claiborne, Shane; Wilson-Hartgrove, Jonathan; Okoro, Enuma. *Common Prayer: A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals* (pp. 562-563). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

We walk in the company of Sojourner Truth, who stood against oppression, righteously declaring in 1852, “Ain’t I a woman!”

We walk in the company of the Argentine mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, who turned their grief to strength, standing together to remember “the disappeared” children of war with a holy indignation.

We walk in the company of Alice Walker, who named the lavender hue of womanish strength.

We walk in the company of you mothers of the faith, who teach us to resist evil with boldness, to lead with wisdom, and to heal. Amen.