



...a pilgrimage towards Easter joy
Lent Guide 2018

How To

This guide walks you through the seven weeks of Lent from Fat Tuesday to Easter Sunday. By providing enough background information throughout the season, our hope is that everyone would be able to jump right in!

Each week includes-

Daily Scripture Readings from the Old Testament, New Testament, Gospels, and Psalms. These readings complement the Sunday readings. Monday through Wednesday readings help the reader reflect on and digest what was read on that week's Sunday. Then the Thursday through Saturday readings help prepare the reader for the Sunday ahead. It's helpful to read through these slowly, talking to Jesus through prayer and/or journaling about the contents of the passage. This process will hopefully stir up a few questions:

1. What do these passages of Scripture reveal about the nature and character of Jesus?
2. What do these passages reveal about your own heart?
3. How can you respond to God's provision in His Son and Spirit in your life and relationships?

A Word to Focus on for the Week. This word can be used to think through the daily scripture readings offered and to center each week's experience to one theme. It would be good to consider what each set of daily readings teaches or challenges about that week's theme.

A Lenten Prayer to help open and close your daily experience. There are a hand handful of prayers that get reused many times throughout the season. As you continue praying them they will take deeper root in your soul and slowly become your own.

Poems, Quotes, Questions, and Images to engage your spirit in different ways.

We hope you will make a strong commitment in this journey through Lent. Remember that these practices are to be formative for your spirit and deepening for your soul. You aren't earning anything from God that he doesn't already freely offer you. Just embrace the season and patiently allow his spirit to work in you as you make this a season of special pursuit of Him.

Lent

I'll never forget the moment I first saw the Secura Desert in south Peru. It was stifling and wonderful. Barren and beautiful. Inspiring and ominous. As breathtaking as the ocean and as imposing as the mountains. I was in awe and I was terrified.

It can be hard to appreciate the desert. Long has it been the metaphor used to conjure up images of scarcity and suffering. To be sure, these feelings were present that day in Peru. Yet as I continued to gaze I was reminded that this terrain was also created by the maker of the mountains. It too has an ecosystem designed to sustain life. I don't fully understand the purpose of the desert on our little blue planet, but I know it has one.

As Christians we live the hope of the resurrection that we celebrate each year at Easter. Tomorrow's joy invested in us today in order that we might be instruments of God's peace on our little blue planet. God's answer to death was defeat, bringing life, freedom, and reconciliation to everything. In short, making all things new.

We live however in the reality that this renewal is in process. These promises are present and growing but have not yet reached their full bloom. So we find ourselves in the tension of tomorrows hope and today's struggle. It is here, in this tension that we find room for a season called lent.

Lent (an Old English word for spring and Latin for slowly) is the season marked by forty days (excluding Sundays) before Easter. Lent points us to the new life of spring by slowing us down and giving us space so that we can take stock of and reflect on our inner world. It is the holy season where we retrace the steps of Jesus as he journeyed under the shadow of the cross toward the climatic events of death, burial, and resurrection. Lent is an opportunity for us to enter into the desert wilderness with him, not always knowing why it is there or what life finds home in it, but knowing that everything finds balance in his kingdom. Lent is a time for fasting and self-denial, though not for denial itself. It is a period to empty ourselves of lesser things so that we might be filled with the greater things of Jesus' good and unshakable kingdom.

As we begin this pilgrimage into the desert with Christ, we do so knowing that in his church, no one journeys alone. We invite you to fast with us as we feast together, to take an honest look at the darkness within and to surrender it to the light. We hope you will join us on this journey.

During Lent, we give ourselves permission to embrace scarcity. While thankful for all of the blessings we receive, we know these blessings can become disordered. What was once helpful for our lives can easily become hurtful or limiting. So we fast.

Fasting

Fasting is the word we use for intentional denial. Far from responsibility, these fasts give us opportunities to pursue greater communion with Jesus by emptying our lives of commotion, clutter and noise, we hope to find greater room to hear Jesus' voice. Rather than simply subtracting something from our lives, this is an opportunity to add something greater.

We should consider ways in which we can leverage the fast to engage in deeper prayer, study, community, meditation, etc. In this way fasting becomes feasting. The desert gives life.

We encourage you to pick something to fast from during the season of Lent. With a heart of confession, humility, and thankfulness give something up that will be missed during this time. Then, as you yearn for it, desire it, and long for it, allow these longings to prompt you into prayer. Hunger reminds us that we are still alive.

Here are some ideas:

- *Food- is a traditional fast. Consider giving up one meal a day (like lunch), or a full day (like Wednesdays) of eating each week. Sugar and Caffeine are also good ideas.
- *Social Media— are you absent when you are with others or overstimulated by all of the online activity? Giving up social media has been particularly popular in the recent years.
- *Alcohol and/or Meth
- *Shopping or excessive spending
- *Make-Up or Working Out
- *Music, TV, or Other forms of media at home, work, or while driving

So what is it for you? What was once life giving but is now consuming more of your time and attention than is healthy? Or what is capturing your attention too much and keeping you from experiencing intimacy with Jesus? What is shaping you in ways that may not be helpful? We invite you to surrender that thing, fasting from it during this season.



Fat Tuesday (Feb. 13) Psalm 110:1-4; Job 19:23-27; 1 Timothy 3:14-16

Fat Tuesday, Shrove Tuesday, Pancake Day, or in French “Mardi Gras,” is traditionally a day of preparation for Lent where believers would feast using up the fats, flours, sugars, and meats that they would be fasting from for lent. In Europe this day is known as pancake day and celebrated with the abundance of delicious circular maple cakes. Of course the celebrations in New Orleans and Brazilian Carnival are known all around the world. Though many use this celebration as a day of over indulgence, a more hopeful

posture would be that of gratitude and thankfulness. Today we celebrate the abundance we have been richly blessed with. Tomorrow we remember our mortality. Today we feast, tomorrow we fast. Everything in balance. This is the way of Jesus’ kingdom.

Ash Wednesday (Feb. 14) Psalm: 95 & 32, Amos 5:6-15; Heb. 12:1-14; Luke 18:9-14

Once a year, on a Wednesday, we mix ashes with oil. We light candles and confess to one another and to God that the darkness in the world is also in us, that we have sinned by what we have done and what we have left undone. We tell the truth of our mortality. Then we smear the ashes on our foreheads and together acknowledge the single reality upon which every Catholic and Protestant, believer and atheist, scientist and mystic can agree: “Remember that you are dust and to dust and to dust you will return.” Sometimes it’s the only thing we know for sure: we will die. This affirmation rests on us as we begin our pilgrimage into the desert. (Genesis 3:19, 18:27, Job 42:6)

Thursday, February 15, 2018: Psalm 25:1-10; Daniel 9:1-14; 1 John 1:3-10

Friday, February 16, 2018: Psalm 25:1-10; Daniel 9:15-25a; 2 Timothy 4:1-5

Saturday, February 17, 2018: Psalm 25:1-10; Psalm 32; Matthew 9:2-13

Join Us! We hope you will begin Lent by joining us for an Ash Wednesday service.

Feb. 14 @7pm

Hosted at First Salem Church 952 S. Hillside

Children are encouraged to join us. The service will last 45 minutes.

Lenten Prayer of St. Ephrem of Syria

○ Lord and Master of my life, grant me not a spirit of sloth, meddling, love of power, and idle talk. But give to me, your servant, a spirit of sober-mindedness, humility, patience, and love. Yes, ○ Lord and King, grant me to see my own faults and not to judge my brother, since you are blessed to the ages of ages. Amen.

Feast Days

It is easy to be tempted in the desert. Inner space brought on by slowing down and opening up can leave us vulnerable to deception. We can begin believing lies about

who we are and who we aren't, turning our fast into a desperate attempt to defend or diminish ourselves. Even Jesus, during his forty day fast, was tempted. However, in the frailty of our humanity we find Jesus standing in triumph, inviting the whole of ourselves into a deeper intimacy.

Every Sunday during Lent we embrace this invitation by breaking our fast, by feasting on that which we have given up, and by celebrating Jesus through worship (at church) and rest. As we feast we surrender the pride we have been harboring from our accomplishment of going without. We give him the shame of our failure where we weren't strong enough to continue. We let go of any self-righteousness that has built up and we allow ourselves to be reminded that we aren't earning anything through our fast. That Jesus' work is already in process; his love, already present.

Temptation

First Sunday of Lent

Psalm 25:1-9, Gen. 9:8-17, 1 Pet 3:18-22, Mark 1:9-15

Immediately after the baptism, the spirit literally drove Jesus out into the wilderness for an appointment with the devil. While Mark's shortness in verses twelve and thirteen lacks details, Matthew chapter four provides insight into this encounter. Matthew recounts three major temptations. The first being a physical temptation, the second an emotional temptation, and the third a temptation of power, glory and pride. Imagine yourself in this position, how would you respond? In all cases, Jesus's response showed his true allegiance and refuge. Clearly, he would not serve the devil for any reason – even if it seemed to line up with something good.

Mark Twain once said, "There is a charm about the forbidden that makes it unspeakably desirable." Each day, we are constantly presented with temptations. We can feel powerless in the wilderness and be tempted to give in. Or we can treat temptations as opportunities to rediscover our need for God's guidance and grace. Let us respond how Jesus responded, by seeking to God for refuge.

Monday: Psalm 77; Job 4:1-21; Ephesians 2:1-10

Tuesday: Psalm 77; Job 5:8-27; 1 Peter 3:8-18a

Wednesday: Psalm 77; Proverbs 30:1-9; Matthew 4:1-11

Thursday: Psalm 22:23-31; Genesis 15:1-6, 12-18; Romans 3:21-31

Friday: Psalm 22:23-31; Genesis 16:1-6; Romans 4:1-12

Saturday: Psalm 22:23-31; Genesis 16:7-15; Mark 8:27-30

Lenten Prayer of St. Ephrem of Syria

○ Lord and Master of my life, grant me not a spirit of sloth, meddling, love of power, and idle talk.
But give to me, your servant, a spirit of sober-mindedness, humility, patience, and love.
Yes, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own faults and not to judge my brother, since you are blessed to the ages of ages. Amen.

Denial

Second Sunday of Lent—February 25

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16 Psalm 22:23-31 Romans 4:13-25 Mark 8:31-38

What good is it to deny oneself? Why does the one through whom all things are made (John 1), tell us to deny ourselves? Can self-denial really lead us into the abundant life? These are the questions we ask about this strange prerequisite from Jesus in this passage. These are also questions we ask ourselves during the season of Lent as we take on a fast.

Be All You Can Be - now that is a good recruitment slogan. Jesus' seems less appealing - *deny [your]selves and take up [your] cross and follow me*. As Jesus is inaugurating a new way to live, he spends no time swindling people into following him by promising prosperity. The new path he is carving requires (but is not limited to) self-denial, suffering, and devotion. Jesus' new way requires these things because it is not interested in lip service, but in transformation of the heart.

I think these words of Jesus describe one of the many mysteries in our Christian faith. Living life to the fullest will require us to deny ourselves. Our Christian ancestor, St. Augustine, said it well - *To serve Him is perfect freedom*. If this sounds like a paradox to you, then you're not alone. Christ not only frees us from something, but he frees us TO something - the abundant life, a life overflowing with goodness, truth, and beauty. Christ has shown us the way to this kind of life. It is not done by gaining the world, but by losing our life for His sake. It is not done by escaping suffering, but by embracing it. This is a new way- *the new way of the Spirit (Romans 7)*.

What are you fasting from and why? How might Jesus dwell in you deeper as a result of your denial? What if he doesn't in that way?

So, to follow Jesus we must deny everything else the lordship of our heart, for the lordship belongs to Christ. In words of Bob Dylan - *you're gonna have to serve somebody*. We are being formed into the servant of something/someone whether we can feel it or not. The season of Lent gives us a chance to examine our hearts, confess, repent, and reorient ourselves to earnestly seek Christ. As we fast, we teach our mind and bodies that though *all things are lawful for us, but we will not be mastered by anything (1 Cor. 6)*, and thus we may serve Him in perfect freedom.

Monday: Psalm 105:1-11, 37-45; Genesis 21:1-7; Hebrews 1:8-12

Tuesday: Psalm 105:1-11, 37-45; Genesis 22:1-19; Hebrews 11:1-3, 13-19

Wednesday: Psalm 105:1-11, 37-45; Jeremiah 30:12-22; John 12:36-43

Thursday: Psalm 19; Exodus 19:1-9a; 1 Peter 2:4-10

Friday: Psalm 19; Exodus 19:9b-15; Acts 7:30-40

Saturday: Psalm 19; Exodus 19:16-25; Mark 9:2-

Prayer of the Week

**God of wilderness and water,
your Son was baptized and
tempted as we are.**

**Guide us through this season,
that we may not avoid struggle,
but open ourselves to blessing,
through the cleansing depths of
repentance
and the heaven-rending words
of the Spirit. Amen.**

Restoration

3rd Sunday of Lent March 4

Exodus 20:1-17 Psalm 19 1

**Corinthians 1:18-25 John
2:13-22**

We do not have to look outside for very long to discover that humanity is in need of restoration. In this week's Gospel, we read the story of Jesus entering the Temple, overturning the money changers' tables and dismissing those selling animals for offerings. Leviticus chapter twelve says that after an Israelite woman has given birth, she is to sacrifice a sheep and a dove. However, if she is financially unable, it would be acceptable to sacrifice two doves instead. The Jewish law study book of sorts, *The Mishnah*, tells us that due to greed, the merchants raised the price of doves so much, that even the doves were too expensive for women living in poverty. In this Gospel passage, Jesus speaks directly to the merchants selling doves, telling them to leave immediately and to cease their acts of oppression. The nearby priests and elders notice Jesus cleansing the Temple and they question His authority. "What sign can you show for doing this," they ask, and Jesus replies by foreshadowing His coming death and resurrection.

A word that seems to rise from this scripture passage is Restoration. Jesus sees the sin that is corrupting the Temple and harming human life, and He has come to set things right; to restore the Temple and all the world. As we go throughout this week, let us sift through the thoughts and events of our daily lives, looking for the ways in which we participate in injustice or bring pain into the world. In what ways are we the cruel merchants, cheating and harming our fellow brothers and sisters? As Jesus is rebuking the merchants and working to cleanse the Temple, the disciples are reminded of the words of the Psalms, "Zeal for your house will consume me." As we pray for forgiveness for our participation in sin and injustice, let us pray also for a soul consumed by zeal for the Lord. A zeal that moves us deeper into compassion and mercy. A zeal that sets our hearts ablaze to proclaim the restoration and healing that is available to us all, through the resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Prayer of St. Francis

**Lord make me an instrument of your
peace**

**Where there is hatred let me sow love
Where there is injury, pardon
Where there is doubt, faith
Where there is despair, hope
Where there is darkness, light
And where there is sadness, joy**

**O divine master grant that I may
not so much seek to be consoled as to
console**

**to be understood as to understand
To be loved as to love**

**For it is in giving that we receive
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned
And it's in dying that we are born to
eternal life**

Amen

**Monday: Psalm 84; 1 Kings 6:1-4, 21-22; 1
Corinthians 3:10-23**

**Tuesday: Psalm 84; 2 Chronicles 29:1-11,
16-19; Hebrews 9:23-28**

**Wednesday: Psalm 84; Ezra 6:1-16; Mark
11:15-19**

**Thursday: Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22; Genesis
9:8-17; Ephesians 1:3-6**

**Friday: Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22; Daniel 12:5-
13; Ephesians 1:7-14**

**Saturday: Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22; Numbers
20:22-29; John 3:1-13**

Light

Fourth Sunday of Lent March 11

Numbers 21:4-9 Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22 Ephesians 2:1-10 John 3:14-21

My favorite experience, as a pilot, is climbing up through gloomy, grey clouds and popping out on top into bright sunshine. All the depressing grays turn into bright blue above and fluffy white clouds below. John 3:14-21 tells us that God sent Jesus to us, not to condemn us, but to save us and bring us into the LIGHT.

Most crimes are committed in darkness because criminals don't want to be exposed. Though we probably don't consider ourselves "criminals", we all have certain areas of our lives that we prefer to keep hidden.

Closets are rooms that have doors for a reason. Some are organized and neat, but others are crammed full of stuff. No one sees the mess, because the door is closed. If one needs something, he can find it if it is on the top layer, but all too often the door gets shut again with the hope of cleaning it out another day.

If we just open the door, and let the LIGHT in and we can see to clean out the mess. It is hard to do the cleaning, but what a joy it is when it is all cleaned out. Jesus is the LIGHT that God sent to take away our darkness. When He shines in our "closets" we see our pride, jealousy, envy, and addictions. His LIGHT is not to condemn us. Rather, He is there to help us clean out the messes in our lives.

Thank you Jesus for your LIGHT and the joy of a clean closet!

Prayer of the Week

**God of wilderness and water,
your Son was baptized and
tempted as we are.**

**Guide us through this season,
that we may not avoid struggle,
but open ourselves to blessing,
through the cleansing depths of
repentance
and the heaven-rending words
of the Spirit. Amen.**

Monday: Psalm 107:1-16; Exodus 15:22-27; Hebrews 3:1-6

Tuesday: Psalm 107:1-16; Numbers 20:1-13; 1 Corinthians 10:6-13

Wednesday: Psalm 107:1-16; Isaiah 60:15-22; John 8:12-20

Thursday: Psalm 51:1-12; Isaiah 30:15-18; Hebrews 4:1-13

Friday: Psalm 51:1-12; Exodus 30:1-10; Hebrews 4:14-5:4

Saturday: Psalm 51:1-12; Habakkuk 3:2-13; John 12:1-11

A Lenten Poem from Wendell Berry
A gracious Sabbath stood here while they stood
Who gave our rest a haven.
Now fallen, they are given
To labor and distress.
These times we know much evil, little good
To steady us in faith
And comfort when our losses press
Hard on us, and we choose,
In panic or despair or both,
To keep what we will lose.

For we are fallen like the trees, our peace
Broken, and so we must
Love where we cannot trust,
Trust where we cannot know,
And must await the wayward-coming [grace](#)
That joins living and dead,
Taking us where we would not go—
Into the boundless dark.
When what was made has been unmade
The Maker comes to His work.

Death

**Fifth Sunday of Lent March 18 Jeremiah 31:31-34
Psalm 51:1-12 Hebrews 5:5-10 John 12:20-33**

During the days of Lent we are counting down. Counting down to Easter Sunday, to the resurrection when we will celebrate the Eternal life found in Christ. Counting down the days to when we can eat sugar again, drink a soda or alcohol or get back on social media. Counting down the days to begin again the thing we sacrificed during this season of reflection, repentance and remembrance of the dark days leading to the cross. But the story of Lent is not meant to further the narrative in our minds that our lives are counting down. Counting down to vacation, retirement, being debt free, the end of life. The story of Lent is to remind us that through these dark days, the days of Lent and every other day of our life, we are not counting down, but counting up. Counting up to the day that we can see the harvest of what we sowed into this life.

Jesus told Andrew and Philip, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds..."

Jesus sowed his life in his disciples, through his miracles and his words. He sowed the single seed of his life on the cross and put it to rest in the tomb. Not because his time was up, he was not counting down, he was counting up to a new beginning. When the doors of the tomb closed over the seed of his life, the last tick of the clock stilled. And on resurrection morning the doors of eternity sprang open and a brand new ticking could be heard, counting up. Now all men, women and children with repentant hearts could reset the clock of their lives upon belief.

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We are in a time, because of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, where our eternity clocks are not counting down to the end of our days on this earth, but counting up to the days of our Eternity. The seed we sow while we live and walk and serve and follow Jesus in the here and now, will be multiplied. What are you sowing?

**Monday: Psalm 119:9-16; Isaiah 43:8-13;
2 Corinthians 3:4-11**

**Tuesday: Psalm 119:9-16; Isaiah 44:1-8;
Acts 2:14-24**

Wednesday: Psalm 119:9-16; Haggai 2:1-9, 20-23; John 12:34-50

Thursday: Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; Deuteronomy 16:1-8; Philippians 2:1-11

Friday: Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; Jeremiah 33:1-9; Philippians 2:12-18

Saturday: Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; Jeremiah 33:10-16; Mark 10:32-34, 46-52

A Prayer of Confession— consider using this prayer to help open yourself up to God. Do not let shame take control but rather, be honest with God, confess your darkness, and move forward confidently in his love-

"Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us, that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of your Holy Name. Amen. "

Glory

Final Sunday of Lent March 25

**Isaiah 50:4-9a Psalm 31:9-16 Philippians 2:5-11
Mark 11:1-11**

When Jesus entered Jerusalem on the back of the unriden colt, he received the greeting of a warrior king. After years of oppression, the Jews believed that there was finally someone whom God had sent to save them from the Romans, a king to start a new uprising against injustice. Jesus was welcomed as a king – but not as a king of the people’s hearts. He was greeted as a savior – but not as a savior of souls. His glory was misunderstood.

Jesus was sent by God to save people – to save them from sin and death. He did come to start something new – a new gathering, a new *ekklesia*. He was a king – a king with a kingdom that transcends time. But, just like for the Jews in Jerusalem on that first Palm Sunday, and with the benefit of 2000 years of hindsight, it is still easy for us to misunderstand Jesus’ identity, or at least to diminish it – after all, how can we grasp the identity of God?

The son of the Almighty God, creator of the heavens and the Earth, came to Earth from His heavenly throne. He lived a truly human life, yet he lived it perfectly, without sin or transgression. He performed miracles. He gave teachings that were different from anything that had ever been presented before. Then, this truly perfect God-With-Us died the death of the worst-of-the-worst, so that you and I might have life to the full. He is completely full of truth, and yet completely full of grace. He brings conviction, but he brings forgiveness. He died the death we deserved so that we can have life with him. There is no one on Earth greater, nor will there ever be until his return. God in the flesh, the Lion and the Lamb, the infinitely-loving righteous judge, the sovereign Lord of all, the beginning and the end – this only begins to describe the marvelous mystery of our Lord.

Lord, help me to better understand who You are and what You have done for me. Reveal Your grace and Your truth to me, and help me to pursue them both. Remind me of my own identity as Your child, and guide me in my pursuit of following You. May You become greater; may I become less.

Monday: Isaiah 42:1-9 Psalm 36:5-11 Hebrews 9:11-15 John 12:1-11

Tuesday: Isaiah 49:1-7 Psalm 71:1-14 1 Corinthians 1:18-31 John 12:20-36

Wednesday: Isaiah 50:4-9a Psalm 70 Hebrews 12:1-3 John 13:21-32 (Marked By Ashes poem on the following page)

Thursday: Exodus 12:1-4, (5-10), 11-14 Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Friday: Isaiah 52:13-53:12 Psalm 22 Hebrews 10:16-25 John 18:1-19:42

Lenten Prayer of St. Ephrem

○ Lord and Master of my life, grant me not a spirit of sloth, meddling, love of power, and idle talk.
But give to me, your servant, a spirit of sober-mindedness, humility, patience, and love.
Yes, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own faults and not to judge my brother, since you are
blessed to the ages of ages. Amen.

Marked by Ashes

Walter Brueggemann

Ruler of the Night, Guarantor of the day . . .

This day — a gift from you.

This day — like none other you have ever given, or we have ever received.

This Wednesday dazzles us with gift and newness and possibility.

This Wednesday burdens us with the tasks of the day, for we are already halfway home

halfway back to committees and memos,
halfway back to calls and appointments,
halfway on to next Sunday,
halfway back, half frazzled, half expectant,
half turned toward you, half rather not.

This Wednesday is a long way from Ash Wednesday,

but all our Wednesdays are marked by ashes —

we begin this day with that taste of ash in our mouth:

of failed hope and broken promises,

of forgotten children and frightened women,

we ourselves are ashes to ashes, dust to dust;

we can taste our mortality as we roll the ash around on our tongues.

We are able to ponder our ashness with
some confidence, only because our every Wednesday of ashes
anticipates your Easter victory over that dry, flaky taste of death.

On this Wednesday, we submit our ashen way to you —
you Easter parade of newness.

Before the sun sets, take our Wednesday and Easter us,

Easter us to joy and energy and courage and freedom;

Easter us that we may be fearless for your truth.

Come here and Easter our Wednesday with
mercy and justice and peace and generosity.

We pray as we wait for the Risen One who comes soon.

Resurrection

First Day of New Creation April 1

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24 Isaiah 25:6-9 John 20:1-18 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Are there any who are devout lovers of God?
Let them enjoy this beautiful bright festival!

Are there any who are grateful servants?
Let them rejoice and enter into the joy of their Lord!

Are there any weary with fasting?
Let them now receive their wages!

If any have toiled from the first hour,
let them receive their due reward;
If any have come after the third hour,
let him with gratitude join in the Feast!
And he that arrived after the sixth hour,
let him not doubt; for he too shall sustain no loss.
And if any delayed until the ninth hour,
let him not hesitate; but let him come too.
And he who arrived only at the eleventh hour,
let him not be afraid by reason of his delay.
For the Lord is gracious and receives the last even as the first.
He gives rest to him that comes at the eleventh hour,
as well as to him that toiled from the first.

To this one He gives, and upon another He bestows.
He accepts the works as He greets the endeavor.
The deed He honors and the intention He commends.
Let us all enter into the joy of the Lord!

First and last alike receive your reward;
rich and poor, rejoice together!
Sober and slothful, celebrate the day!
You that have kept the fast, and you that have not,
rejoice today for the Table is richly laden!

Feast royally on it, the calf is a fatted one.
Let no one go away hungry. Partake, all, of the cup of faith.
Enjoy all the riches of His goodness!

Let no one grieve at his poverty,
for the universal kingdom has been revealed.

Let no one mourn that he has fallen again and again;
for forgiveness has risen from the grave.

Let no one fear death, for the Death of our Savior has set us free.
He has destroyed it by enduring it.
He destroyed Hell when He descended into it.
He put it into an uproar even as it tasted of His flesh.

Isaiah foretold this when he said,
"You, O Hell, have been troubled by encountering Him below."
Hell was in an uproar because it was done away with.
It was in an uproar because it is mocked.
It was in an uproar, for it is destroyed.
It is in an uproar, for it is annihilated.
It is in an uproar, for it is now made captive.

Hell took a body, and discovered God.
It took earth, and encountered Heaven.
It took what it saw, and was overcome by what it did not see.

O death, where is thy sting?
O Hell, where is thy victory?

Christ is Risen, and you, o death, are annihilated!
Christ is Risen, and the evil ones are cast down!
Christ is Risen, and the angels rejoice!
Christ is Risen, and life is liberated!

Christ is Risen, and the tomb is emptied of its dead;
for Christ having risen from the dead,
is become the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

To Him be Glory and Power forever and ever. Amen!
(The Easter sermon of John Chrysostom (circa 400 AD))

A special thanks to all of the contributors of this little guide.

**May the loving power of God,
which raised Jesus to new life,
strengthen you in hope,
enrich you with love,
and fill you with joy!**