

EASTER SUNDAY 2023

He is risen!

Reflection and Prayer for Lent with Sunday readings and a spiritual teacher from our Catholic tradition - Saints Bernard of Clairvaux, Francis of Assisi, Julian of Norwich and Hildegard of Bingen.

SIGN OF THE CROSS.

Loving God, there is no need for us to be afraid.

We are looking for Jesus, who was crucified and has risen, as he said he would.

FROM THE READINGS

Gospel: After the Sabbath, and towards dawn on the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala and the other Mary went to visit the sepulchre. And all at once there was a violent earthquake, for the angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled away the stone and sat on it. His face was like lightning, his robe white as snow. The guards were so shaken, so frightened of him, that they were like dead men. But the angel spoke; and he said to the women, 'There is no need for you to be afraid. I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said he would. Come and see the place where he lay, then go quickly and tell his disciples, "He has risen from the dead and now he is going before you to Galilee; it is there you will see him." Now I have told you.' Filled with awe and great joy the women came quickly away from the tomb and ran to tell the disciples.

And there, coming to meet them was Jesus. 'Greetings' he said. And the women came up to him and, falling down before him, clasped his feet. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid; go and tell my disciples that they must leave for Galilee; they will see me there.'

SAINT BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX 1090–1153

At age 21, **Bernard**, from a well-off French family, went to become a Benedictine monk at the very poor, strict monastery of Citeaux and later founded a new community at Clairvaux ('Clear Vision'). He taught that God's love is the origin of all love and only God can satisfy the deepest longings of human hearts. He encouraged the Benedictine tradition of prayerful reading of scripture, 'Sacred Reading' (*Lectio Divina*), a balanced approach to spirituality and prayer to Mary, Mother of Jesus, in times of need.

Everywhere in this song, the speaker is love. To understand what it is saying, we must love. Unless you love, do not bother to listen to love's song – you will not understand it. A cold heart cannot understand words of fire ... For someone who does not love, the language of love is babble ... Those to whom the Holy Spirit has given the grace of loving will understand this language. They know its words well and they respond in the same tongue, that is, by works of love and devotion. Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermons on the Song of Songs*, 83.3.

————— SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI c.1182–1226 —————

Francis, came from a prosperous family in Assisi, dreaming of a military career, fame and fortune. After a year as a prisoner of war, he renounced all riches to live a poor, simple, Gospel - based life, depending only on God. He loved God's creation and shared Jesus' love for the poor. Many joined Francis to become deeply prayerful people, serving others, 'contemplatives in action.'

Be praised Lord, with all Your Creatures, especially Sir Brother Sun ... Sister Moon and the stars ... Brother wind ... Sister Water ... Brother Fire ... Sister Mother Earth ...

Francis of Assisi, "Canticle of Brother Sun"

Where there is love and wisdom

There is neither fear nor ignorance.

Where there is patience and humility
there is neither anger nor disturbance.

Where there is joy in poverty,
there is neither covetousness nor avarice.

Where there is inner peace and meditation,
there is neither anxiety nor dissipation.

Where fear of the Lord guards the house,
the enemy cannot gain entry.

Where there is mercy and discernment,
there is neither excess nor hardness of heart.

The Admonitions

————— ('LADY') JULIAN OF NORWICH 1342-c.1416 —————

In May 1373, while ill and expecting to die, a 30-year-old Englishwoman experienced great peace and joy because of visions regarding Jesus' life, suffering and God's love. We know her writings as Showings or Revelations of Divine Love. 'Julian', whose real name we do not know, became an anchoress, living alone in a small hut attached to the Church of St Julian in Norwich. Many came to her for spiritual guidance.

I saw a marvellous compassion that our Lord has for us for our sufferings.

Revelations of Divine Love.

I was taught that love was our Lord's meaning ... that before God made us, he loved us ... And in this love our life is everlasting ...

Revelations of Divine Love.

And so our good Lord answered all the questions

and doubts which I could raise, saying ...

"I may make all things well, and I can make all things well,
and I will make all things well; and you will see yourself

that every kind of thing will be well ... ”
and in these words God wishes us to be enclosed in rest and peace.

————— HILDEGARD OF BINGEN 1098-1179 —————

Born into a noble family, Hildegard became a Benedictine nun with expertise in theology, music, art, poetry, medicine, leadership and teaching. Many came to ask for her advice. Her insights about God’s creation and the role of human beings in the created world have much to offer us today.

Glance at the sun. See the moon and the stars. Gaze at the beauty of earth’s greenings. Now. Think ...

The mystery of God hugs you in its all-encompassing arms.

PRAYER OF JULIAN OF NORWICH

In you, Father all-mighty,

we have our preservation and our bliss.

In you, Christ, we have our restoring and our saving.

You are our mother, brother, and Saviour.

In you, our Lord the Holy Spirit, is marvellous and plenteous grace.

You are our clothing; for love you wrap us and embrace us.

You are our maker, our lover, our keeper.

Teach us to believe that by your grace all shall be well,

and all shall be well,

and all manner of things shall be well. Amen.

Adapted. Prayer of Julian of Norwich



Prepared for Lent Year A 2023 for the Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst, PO Box 201 Bendigo, Vic. 3552 Email: adultfaith@sandhurst.catholic.org.au. To learn more about Saints Bernard of Clairvaux, and Francis of Assisi, Lady Julian of Norwich and Saint Hildegard of Bingen: <https://www.capuchin.org.au/about-us/st-francis-of-assis/> OR <http://www.franciscans.org.au/spirituality/st-francis-and-st-clare/>; <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/julian>; http://www.orderofjulian.org/RDL-Motherhood_of_God.html; Search for Revelations of Divine Love, by Julian of Norwich. <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/med/hildegarde.asp>;