



Pathways Monthly Prayer Readings

Mystic of the Month: Cole Arthur Riley is a writer, liturgist, speaker seeking a deeply contemplative life marked by embodiment and emotion. She is the founder and writer of Black Liturgies, a project seeking to integrate concepts of dignity, lament, rage, justice, rest, and liberation with the practice of written prayer. She currently serves as the Content and Spiritual Formation Manager for a center for Christian studies at Cornell University called Chesterton House. <https://blackliturgist.com/about>

Mon. April 5, 2021 Easter Monday

Early in the morning on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary of Magdalene came to the tomb. She saw that the stone has been rolled away from the entrance, so she ran off to Simon Peter and the other disciple- the one Jesus loved- and told them, "The Rabbi has been taken from the tomb! We don't know where they have put Jesus!" At that, Peter and the other disciple started out toward the tomb. They were running side-by-side, but then the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He didn't enter, but bent down to peer in and saw the linen wrappings lying on the ground. Then Peter arrived and entered the tomb. He observed the linen wrappings on the ground, and saw the piece of cloth that had covered Jesus' head lying not with the wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the disciple who had arrived first at the tomb went in. He saw and believed. As yet, they didn't understand the scripture that Jesus was to rise from the dead. Then the disciples went back to their homes.

Meanwhile, Mary stood weeping beside the tomb. Even as she wept, she stooped to peer inside, and there she saw two angels in dazzling robes. One was seated at the head and the other at the foot of the place where Jesus' body had lain.

They asked her, "Why are you weeping?" She answered them, "Because they have taken away my Rabbi, and I don't know where they have put the body." No sooner had she said this than she turned around and caught the sight of Jesus standing there, but she didn't know it was Jesus. He asked her, "Why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?" She supposed it was the gardener, so she said, "Please if you're the one who carried Jesus away, tell me where you've laid the body and I will take it away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned to him and said, "Rabboni!" -which means "Teacher."

Jesus then said, "Don't hold onto me, for I have not yet ascended to Abba God. Rather, go to the sisters and brothers and tell them, I am ascending to my Abba and to your Abba, my God and your God!" Mary of Magdala went to the disciples. "I have seen the Teacher!" she announced. Then she reported what the savior has said to her. -Inclusive Bible

<p>Tues. April 6, 2021 Contemplative Sit</p>	<p>God of the multitude, We praise you for being a God who contains a diversity of personhood in one. In your very being, you possess a sacred community where each part is distinct and beautiful and necessary. Make our community like you, that we would no longer be content with the bland flavor of sameness. That we would no longer use the language of unity and oneness as a veil for the suppression of voice, body, and culture. Be near to those who have offered up the particularity of their stories to bring about restoration, only to be met with accusations of divisiveness and unkindness. Lord, let our kindness be marked by telling the truth. And if division follows, let it be for our own protection- that you would lead us into spaces that see and honor that we are not the same. And it is very good. @blackliturgies</p>
<p>Wed. April 7, 2021 Lectio Divina</p>	<p>John 20:19-31 In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were locked in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Temple authorities. Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Having said this, the Savior showed them the marks of crucifixion. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw Jesus, who said to them again, "Peace be with you. As Abba God sent me, so I'm sending you." After saying this, Jesus breathed on them and said, "Receive the holy spirit. If you forgive anyone sins, they are forgiven if you retain anyone's sins, they are retained."</p> <p>It happened that one of the Twelve, Thomas nicknamed the Twin, was absent when Jesus came. The other disciples kept telling him, "We've seen Jesus!" Thomas' answer was, "I'll never believe it without putting my finger in the nail marks and my hand into the spear wound."</p> <p>On the eighth day, the disciples were once more in the room, and this time Thomas was with them. Despite the locked doors, Jesus came and stood before them saying, "Peace be with you." Then, to Thomas, Jesus said, "Take your finger and examine my hands. Put your hand into my side. Don't persist in your unbelief, but believe!" Thomas said in response, "My Savior and my God!" Jesus then said, "You've become a believer because you saw me. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." Jesus performed many other signs as well- signs not recorded here in the presence of the disciples. But these have been recorded to help you believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Only Begotten, so that by believing you may have life in Jesus' Name. -Inclusive Bible</p>
<p>Thur. April 8, 2021 Centering Prayer</p>	<p>Psalm 133 Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers and sisters dwell in unity! It is like vistas seen from atop a mountain one has climbed . . . Or like the stillness of a sunset after a long day's work. It is like a shimmering rainbow, breaking through a summer rain. When men and women dwell in harmony, the star of Truth appears! -Psalms for Praying © 2007 Nan C. Merrill</p>

<p>Tues April 13, 2021 Contemplative Sit</p>	<p>God of stillness, How did you know when to leave and went to draw near to others? To be alone can do tear and torture to the soul; it can rouse fear and shame in us that we would not ordinarily encounter. Would you grant us that discernment which awakens us to the thirst for solitude in our own soul, but not without your fierce protection of our minds and bodies as we name to be alone is to risk ourselves. Train our communities in the way of deep solidarity which stands together in suffering and celebration, but also which reminds one another that there are times when we must be alone with our own selfhood and story, growing in care and curiosity about ourselves as we would our neighbor. Let us be present in love to our own emotions, bodies, and thoughts for we are worthy of being seen by others. @blackliturgies</p>
<p>Wed. April 14, 2021 Lectio Divina</p>	<p>Luke 24: 36-48 While they were still talking about this, Jesus actually stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." In their panic and fright, they thought they were seeing a ghost. Jesus said to them, "Why are you disturbed? Why do such ideas cross your mind? Look at my hands and my feet; it is I, really. Touch me and see- a ghost doesn't have flesh and bones as I do." After saying this, Jesus showed them the wounds. They were still incredulous for sheer joy and wonder so Jesus said to them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" After being given a piece of cooked fish, the savior ate in their presence. Then Jesus said to them, "Remember the words I spoke when I was still with you: everything written about me in the law of Moses and the Prophets and the psalms had to be fulfilled." Then Jesus opened their minds to the understanding of the scriptures, saying, "That is why the scriptures say that the Messiah must suffer and rise from the dead on the third day. In the Messiah's name, repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of all this." -Inclusive Bible</p>
<p>Thur. April 15, 2021 Centering Prayer</p>	<p>Psalm 4 Answer me when I call, O God of my heart! You enveloped me in Love when I was in dire distress. Be gracious to me now; hear my prayer! O friends, how long will my reputation suffer shame? How long will you listen to false words? I seek only what is life-giving. You know that God dwells with all who are filled with love; Love hears when our hearts cry out. Though you may feel angry, do not give in to fear; Commune with the Heart of your heart as you rest; be in silence. Bask in the stillness. Face your fears with forgiveness and trust in Love. There are many who say, "Grant us special favors, O Mighty One! Bestow upon us you grace that we may prosper!" The Beloved has brought more joy to my heart than they have when their banks are filled. In peace I will spend my days and sleep at night; For You alone, O God, teach me the way of Love! -Psalms for Praying © 2007 Nan C. Merrill</p>

<p>Tues. April 20, 2021 Contemplative Sit</p>	<p>God who rests, It is difficult for us to imagine of Christ who, having all power and capacity to heal others, still at times walked away. Who napped unapologetically in the face of danger. Give us the courage to rest. The holy audacity to do absolutely nothing at all. And as we do, allow us to hold vigil for the tombs of this world while honoring that we are neither Savior nor slave. Grant us a slowness that allows us to feel what hurts and makes healing possible. Let our rest be our liberation. @blackliturgies</p>
<p>Wed. April 21, 2021 Lectio Divina</p>	<p>John 10:11-18 Jesus said, "I came that you may have life and have it to the full. I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd would die for the sheep. The hired hand, who is neither shepherd nor owner of the sheep, catches sight of the wolf coming and runs away, leaving the sheep to be scattered or snatched by the wolf. That's because the hired hand works only for pay and has no concern for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me, in the same way Abba God knows me and I know God- and for the sheep I will lay down my life.</p> <p>I have other sheep that don't belong to this fold- I must lead them too, and they will hear my voice. And then there will be one flock, one shepherd. This is why Abba God loves me- because I lay down my life, only to take it up again. No one takes my life from me; I lay it down freely. I have the power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it up again. This command I received from my Abba." -Inclusive Bible</p>
<p>Thur. April 22, 2021 Centering Prayer</p>	<p>Psalm 23 LORD God, divine shepherd, in the days ahead, just as it has been all my life, I shall not want for anything. You will rest me in rich pasture and lead me beside calm waters. You will bring my inner being back where it belongs, and lead me along the right paths, for the sake of your name. Even when things seem at their darkest, sensing your presence, I fear nothing; you are sure of the way ahead, and you protect me. Indeed, in spite of the adversity surrounding me you continue to provide abundantly for my well-being; Anointing me with your hospitality and pouring out blessing upon blessing. Surely good and loving kindness will pursue me all my days, I will return, and you, O LORD, shall be my dwelling-place for days without end. - Jeff Shrowder</p>

<p>Tues. April 27, 2021 Contemplative Sit</p>	<p>Shelter God, Help us to trust the promise. There are times it feels like our present reality will always be. It becomes difficult to dream. Our imaginations for healing and health are far too small. Expand them, God, that we might grow the branches of hope into something we can cling onto without them buckling under the weight of our next tragedy. Let our dreaming be our rest, a shade from the heat of the evils of this world – that our alienation and oppression would not resign us to the wilderness. Be who you say you are. If you are a strong hold, then keep the marginalized within the walls of your chest. If you are destroyer of the veil, come and let it fall from the eyes of those who do injustice and make death. And protect our dreaming, Lord, that as we wait for you, our hope would not be tarnished by our tears but renewed–sacred glints of light in the darkness. @blackliturgies</p>
<p>Wed. April 28, 2021 Lectio Divina</p>	<p>John 15:1-8 Jesus said, “I am the true vine, and my Abba is the vine grower, who cuts off every branch in me that doesn’t bear fruit, but prunes the fruitful ones to increase their yield. You’ve been pruned already, thanks to the word that I have spoken to you. Live on in me, as I do in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit of itself apart from the vine, neither can you bear fruit apart from me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who live in me and I in them will bear abundant fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. Those who don’t live in me are like withered, rejected branches, to be picked up and thrown on the fire and burned. If you live on in me, and my words live on in you, ask whatever you want, and it will be done for you. My Abba will be glorified if you bear much fruit and thus prove to be my disciples. As my Abba has loved me, so I have loved you. Live on in my love. And you will live on in my love if you keep my commandments, just as I live on in Abba God’s love and have kept God’s Commandments. -Inclusive Bible</p>
<p>Thur. April 29, 2021 Centering Prayer</p>	<p>Psalms 22:25-31 To You, O God, I lift up my voice in the great congregation; for You promise to remain with those whose love is steadfast. The hungry shall eat and be satisfied; Those who seek You shall sing praises! Your Heart is our dwelling place forever! All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to Love’s way; And all the families of the nations shall bow down with grateful hearts. For power and authority belong to the Most High, who rules over the nations. Yes, the proud of the earth shall be humbled, While those who still live in fear and illusions will separate themselves not knowing the indwelling Peace of God. Posterity shall know and serve Love, telling of the One who abides in all to the coming generations, and proclaiming deliverance to a people yet unborn that the Most High dwells among us. -Psalms for Praying © 2007 Nan C. Merrill</p>