

A GOD WHO KNOWS SUFFERING

SCRIPTURE: ISAIAH 50:4–9A

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## Having Adversaries

*Who are my adversaries?*

*Let them confront me.*

Isaiah 50:8b

Do you have adversaries? Some people might say that if you don't, it means you haven't really stood for anything. But if you're anything like me, you are polite and well-behaved. You learned from a young age to be respectful and know your manners. You are *nice*.

One of the greatest threats to Christianity is our insistence on being nice. I know, this is hard to hear! We don't want to ruffle feathers. We want people to like us. But Jesus, who loved all people, certainly ruffled feathers. He made people angry because of the truths he shared. Jesus was not always well-behaved or polite.

Our reading from Isaiah reminds us that sometimes people will not agree with us and might even be angry with us. But if what we are doing and what we stand for is *of God*, God will see us through.



*Loving God, help me stand for your love, justice, and mercy. Strengthen me and uphold me so that I might serve you. Amen.*

Kate S. Forer, Saratoga Springs, New York

THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 2020

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## A GOD WHO KNOWS SUFFERING

SCRIPTURE: PSALM 31:9–16

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### With Us

*Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am in distress.*

Psalm 31:9

As a pastor, I often get asked the question, “Where was God?” For example: Where was God when I was suffering? Where was God when that shooting occurred? Where was God the day of the earthquake? Where was God during my cancer treatments?

The answer is always the same. God is with us *in* our suffering, *in* our distress, and *in* our struggle. God knows our pain and our distress. In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God intimately experienced the struggle and pain and distress of humanity, and God comes particularly close to us in our struggles even now. Where was God? God was, and always is, with us.



*Mysterious God, thank you for being with me in my distress, in my pain, and in my suffering. Help me to know that when you feel far away you are as close to me as my breath. Amen.*

Kate S. Forer, Saratoga Springs, New York

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A GOD WHO KNOWS SUFFERING

SCRIPTURE: PSALM 31:9–16

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**At Our Worst**

*For my life is spent with sorrow,*

.....

*and my bones waste away.*

Psalm 31:10

The psalmist is at a very low point, in a dire moment of sorrow and sighing. Have you ever felt that? I know there have been times in my life when I've experienced deep grief. At those times, I was not able to eat and felt as if I was wasting away. Many of the grief psalms eventually turn into psalms of thanksgiving. Even so, it's important to stay in grief for a while and not rush beyond verse 10.

Tomorrow, we can get to the hopeful stuff. But for now, let's remember that we worship a God who loves us at our absolute worst, a God who knows us when we have hit rock bottom, and a God who still loves us when we are at the lowest of the low. God invites us to feel the dark and dreary parts of human existence and to come through them to the other side.



*Holy God, thank you for holding me while I cry.  
Amen.*

Kate S. Forer, Saratoga Springs, New York

SATURDAY, APRIL 4, 2020

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## A GOD WHO KNOWS SUFFERING

SCRIPTURE: PSALM 31:9–16

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### Trust

*But I trust in you, O LORD;  
I say, "You are my God."*

Psalm 31:14

In the ancient world, the gods were immortal beings of honor and glory. They did not suffer and die. Only humans did that. But then the God of Abraham entered, the God of Jesus. Now this was a different kind of God. This God, the one and only God, is the one in whom we trust—not to make us victorious but to show us gentle compassion, hopeful love, and unending mercy. It is this God whom we claim to belong to and whom we know intimately through Jesus Christ.

We trust in a God who knows suffering. Our God, through the incarnation, knows the rumbling of an empty stomach, a crick in the neck, a cry of grief.



*Everlasting God, I trust in your presence in me and  
around me. Amen.*

Kate S. Forer, Saratoga Springs, New York

THE POWER OF LOVE

SCRIPTURE: PHILIPPIANS 2:5–11

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## A New Kind of Power

*He humbled himself  
and became obedient to the point of death—  
even death on a cross.*

Philippians 2:8

Today is Palm Sunday, a day of joy and triumph and a day of deep tension and fearful anticipation. Palm Sunday begins the most important week of the Christian calendar: Holy Week.

On Palm Sunday, Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, symbolizing a new kind of power coming to the world: a power of love, hospitality, healing, and generosity. It is a power that does not exploit or hurt others, a power miraculous enough to love even in the face of pain and death and hate. A power humble enough to expose the fallacy of our own systems of destruction and evil. It is a power made incarnate in Jesus.



*Dear Jesus, thank you for loving us so much as to ride  
into Jerusalem that fateful day. Help us to follow you.  
Amen.*

Kate S. Forer, Saratoga Springs, New York

MONDAY, APRIL 6, 2020

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THE POWER OF LOVE

SCRIPTURE: ACTS 2:42–47

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## That Feeling

*Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles.*

Acts 2:43

I feel a little short on “awe” these days. Maybe I haven’t spent enough time gazing at the stars, praying with my church, or singing hymns. Maybe I haven’t paid enough attention to the transformation of people through the love of God. Maybe I haven’t been around infants or the elderly—those people who have lost all sense of pretense and busyness and are able to simply rest in God.

A feeling of awe is absolutely essential in helping us feel the presence of an awesome, powerful, and mysterious God. That feeling of awe might actually be the beginning of religious faith. It could occur when you walk into a centuries-old cathedral or see a brand-new baby. Have you experienced awe lately? If so, thank God.



*Awesome God, fill me with wonder at your mighty works this Holy Week. Amen.*

Kate S. Forer, Saratoga Springs, New York

THE POWER OF LOVE

SCRIPTURE: JOHN 13:1–17, 31B–35

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## A New Commandment

*I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.*

John 13:34

Before he leaves his disciples, Jesus very clearly provides them with a new commandment. Because Jesus' disciples were Jewish, they would have been familiar with the commandment to love God and to love neighbor.

But I wonder if Jesus was being really specific here. Did he mean that the disciples were to specifically love the people in that very room? This commandment will sustain them as a beloved community after Jesus leaves. The disciples are to love as Jesus loved. By this they will make Jesus known in the world through the power of Christ's love.



*Dear God, help me to be more loving so that people know I belong to you. Amen.*

Kate S. Forer, Saratoga Springs, New York

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 2020

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## THE POWER OF LOVE

SCRIPTURE: JOHN 18:1–19:42

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### Denial

*The woman said to Peter, “You are not also one of this man’s disciples, are you?” He said, “I am not.”*

John 18:17

I feel so badly for Peter, partly because I find him to be so utterly human. I hate to say it, but I probably would have answered the same way. We might not want to admit this, because we’d like to think we’d be the hero. We want to think that if faced with such a question, we would bravely and courageously claim our allegiance to Jesus. But here’s the thing . . . on this night, Peter knows nothing of the resurrection. He has not come to know the power of God’s love in its fullness. He is still under the power of death. He thinks death has won.

So, when asked, he denies Jesus. Much later, he will get a chance to claim his place in the family of faith and to go to his death proclaiming the power of love.



*God, help us to trust you even when we don’t know how the story ends. Amen.*

Kate S. Forer, Saratoga Springs, New York

THE POWER OF LOVE

SCRIPTURE: JOHN 13:1–17, 31–35

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## Feet

*Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him.*

John 13:5

People are self-conscious about their feet. Before heading to a Maundy Thursday service to get their feet washed, congregants make sure their toenails are trimmed and their feet are as clean as possible. We're self-conscious about our feet, our socks, our odor, and our hygiene. The smelliest parts of ourselves reveal our vulnerability and humanity.

But I think God loves the embarrassing, smelliest parts of us the best. God loves the parts of us that we want to hide, that we'd rather not draw attention to, and the things we want to keep hidden. I think God finds us most beautiful and most intriguing when we are the most real. When we stop pretending and admit that our feet need washing, we seek the loving touch of Jesus.



*Holy God, take my feet and all the parts of me that I'd rather keep hidden, and show me how to love them as you do. Amen.*

Kate S. Forer, Saratoga Springs, New York

GOOD FRIDAY: APRIL 10, 2020

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THE POWER OF LOVE

SCRIPTURE: JOHN 18:1–19:42

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## Jesus before Pilate

*Pilate asked him, “What is truth?”*

John 18:38

As a child at a Catholic school, I was surrounded with messages about values. For example, clever sayings were posted on bulletin boards throughout my school. “Stand for nothing,” one said, “and you’ll fall for anything.” Another saying hung on the wall of my eighth-grade classroom: “What is popular is not always right. What is right is not always popular.” As a preadolescent girl, these sayings helped prepare me for the world of peer pressure.

Recently I’ve recognized how much the value statements of my youth are also important for me as an adult. We live in a world that struggles with truth. If we do not have conviction and know deep in our bones what is right and wrong, then we won’t know what to do when faced with a big decision. Like Pilate, we will merely turn to the crowds for our answer.



*God of mercy, help me to know your truth and live by conviction. Amen.*

Kate S. Forer, Saratoga Springs, New York

SATURDAY, APRIL 11, 2020

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THE POWER OF LOVE

SCRIPTURE: JOHN 18:1–19:42

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## Quiet of the Tomb

*They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews.*

John 19:40

Today is a day of stillness and waiting, a day when the whole world holds its breath to see what God might do next. Today is a day of tears and mourning, of quiet sorrow when Mary, the mother of Jesus, wakes in her bed and hopes it was all a bad dream.

But this isn't a dream. Jesus is gone. Those of us who have lost a loved one know how strange it feels when the world continues turning. For those new to grief, it is hard to understand how that could be possible. The secret of Easter will soon be revealed. The quiet of the tomb turns into the quiet of the womb, preparing for new life.



*God of grace, be with us while we wait to see what amazing thing you'll do next. Amen.*

Kate S. Forer, Saratoga Springs, New York

EASTER: SUNDAY, APRIL 12, 2020

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SEEING JESUS

SCRIPTURE: JOHN 20:1–18

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## Rolled Away

*Jesus said to her, “Mary!”*

John 20:16

When Mary hears Jesus speak her name, her whole world changes. Jesus is risen. Life can begin again.

Mary’s story was once a story of loss and grief, where violence and destruction and greed had the final say. Mary and her people were victims at the hands of the powerful authorities of their day. Now she finds herself right in the middle of a beautiful new story of joy and life, of God’s power overcoming the greed, destruction, violence, and brutality that she has known and witnessed.

Jesus is alive! When we think the story is over, it is not. When we think the tomb is sealed, we wake one day to find it open.



*Holy God, what new story are you calling me to live out? Show me what stones need to be rolled away.  
Amen.*

Kate S. Forer, Saratoga Springs, New York

SEEING JESUS

SCRIPTURE: JOHN 20:19–31

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## Offering Peace

*Jesus came and stood among them and said,  
“Peace be with you.”*

John 20:19b

Every Sunday morning in our church we pass the peace. “Peace be with you,” we say. We don’t share the peace merely to catch up or be social. We share the peace as a practice of reconciliation. There are times when I have had a conflict with people in my congregation. Being able to go up to them after confession, look them in the eye, and shake their hand means a lot. It means that we are trying to leave that conflict behind us and that we wish each other God’s peace.

When Jesus appeared to his disciples in the upper room after his death, I think he was doing something similar. His disciples had just denied him and left him to die alone. They pretended they didn’t even know him. When Jesus wished them peace, it must have been to leave the past behind and embrace the new Easter world together.



*Holy One, thank you for always offering us forgiveness and second (or third, or fourth . . . ) chances.  
Amen.*

TUESDAY, APRIL 14, 2020

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## SEEING JESUS

SCRIPTURE: 1 PETER 1:3–9

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### New Birth

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*

1 Peter 1:3

Every time the sun rises, God offers us a new day and fresh hope. Every time we remember the new birth Jesus Christ provided for us through his death and resurrection, God offers us a “living hope.”

The words “living hope” imply that Jesus’s message will go on living far into the future. Because the Gospel is living, we continually find God’s word in new places, even in dark and scary places like the grave. We have been born into this new and living hope through the mercy of God. While we once may have felt dead inside, we have been offered a new life of living hope!



*Merciful God, we give you unending thanks for the mystery of our faith and the love that you show us.  
Amen.*

Kate S. Forer, Saratoga Springs, New York

SEEING JESUS

SCRIPTURE: 1 PETER 1:3–9

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## Tested

*So that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

1 Peter 1:7

I don't know if God tests people, but if God does, my congregation has certainly been tested. A fire burned our sanctuary to the ground. Conflicts in the church led some members to leave. Angry neighbors threatened to sue us when they didn't like the services we were providing for the poor.

Yet distraction might be the most dangerous test of all. When people grumble and demand that we attend to their gripes immediately, it can be hard to remember the purpose set before us. How do we recenter ourselves and find our purpose in God in the midst of a world that distracts? How do we hear Jesus calling us through the noise?



*Dear Jesus, help me cut through the noise and distractions to find your holy presence. Amen.*

Kate S. Forer, Saratoga Springs, New York

THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 2020

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SEEING JESUS

SCRIPTURE: PSALM 16

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## Seeing God

*You show me the path of life.*

*In your presence there is fullness of joy;*

*in your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

Psalm 16:11

As Christians, we believe that Jesus is God. When we wonder what God is like, we can simply look to Jesus to get a glimpse of God's identity. Sure, there's a lot about God that will always remain a mystery or be beyond our own understanding. But Jesus is as close as we can get. In following Jesus, we are following the way of God.

In our psalm for today, the psalmist writes, "You show me the path of life." That's a pretty good way to describe the Christian life. Jesus led us on a path of love, service, humility, hospitality, justice, and freedom. Walking this path leads us into such joy, such fullness of life. It is, quite simply, the best way to live.



*Courageous Christ, help me to walk in your ways and to offer my hands in service and love. Amen.*

Kate S. Forer, Saratoga Springs, New York

SEEING JESUS

SCRIPTURE: JOHN 20:19–31

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## Doubt

*But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.”*

John 20:25

Doubt is a very important part of faith. If handled lovingly, doubt can be a wonderful catalyst into a *deeper* faith. But I’ve always found it peculiar that Thomas doubts his friends in this passage from the Gospel of John. I would have guessed that he would trust his colleagues and believe what they told him.

But Thomas is traumatized and very, very scared. His teacher has died, and he’s worried that they are all at risk. Thomas feels deeply disappointed, and he does not even trust his friends. He wants proof. Can you blame him? Thankfully Thomas keeps showing up until he really does see Jesus. God invites us to keep showing up and to work through our doubts and into a deeper place of faith.



*Loving God, help me to trust in you, in spite of my doubts and my fears, so that I might be led into a deeper and more profound faith. Amen.*

Kate S. Forer, Saratoga Springs, New York

SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 2020

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## SEEING JESUS

SCRIPTURE: JOHN 20:19–31

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### Wounds

*Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.”*

John 20:27

Even after his resurrection, Jesus still bears the wounds of his crucifixion and death. The world has wounded all of us. We, too, have known death and loss, betrayal and desertion. No one can make it through life without wounds.

Jesus reminds us, in his own physical body, that our deepest wounds can be redeemed by God—not erased, but redeemed. Even our most broken places are not outside the healing love and grace of God.



*Dear God, thank you for loving me even though I am wounded. Help me to heal. Amen.*

Kate S. Forer, Saratoga Springs, New York

ON THE ROAD

SCRIPTURE: JOHN 20:19–31

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## Faith

*Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!”*

John 20:28

Thomas’s doubt is replaced by powerful faith when he meets Christ face-to-face. Even though Jesus chastises Thomas at the end of this story for not believing before he sees the risen Christ, I still think doubt is OK. It’s natural. It’s very human. In fact, Thomas’s doubt just makes the gospel all the more believable. In the aftermath of the crucifixion, Thomas is full of fear. He doesn’t trust anyone or anything. Until he, like Mary, needs his great moment of enlightenment.

When Thomas finally *sees Jesus*, he knows exactly who he is—his Lord and his God. We all have moments of *seeing*, when the scales fall from our eyes and we find ourselves immersed in a powerful faith that is beyond all comprehending.



*Loving God, when we are having difficulties believing in you, please love us anyway. Amen.*

Kate S. Forer, Saratoga Springs, New York

MONDAY, APRIL 20, 2020

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ON THE ROAD

SCRIPTURE: PSALM 116:1–4, 12–19

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## Gratitude

*What shall I return to the LORD  
for all his bounty to me?*

Psalm 116:12

It's very hard for us to receive a gift without having a gift to give. "But I didn't get you anything!" we might exclaim when handed an unexpected present. But for the gift giver, the true delight is in the giving. It's an expression of love or appreciation.

We can never give back to God a gift that is equal to what God has given us. In some ways, every time God gives us a blessing, we could say, "But I didn't get you anything!" When I think of all the blessings of my life, my heart swells with love and gratitude. I think God may have designed it that way. With all the love and gratitude filling our hearts, we begin to live our lives from that place. And living lives of gratitude and love becomes the gift we give to God for all God's bounty to us.



*Loving God, thank you! Amen.*

Kate S. Forer, Saratoga Springs, New York

ON THE ROAD

SCRIPTURE: ACTS 2:14A, 36–41

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## The First Converts

*Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?” Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*

Acts 2:37–38

Peter told the crowds that Jesus, whom they crucified, was actually the Lord and Messiah. These were the first people to hear about the story of Jesus after the resurrection, and they believed the good news. They are often called “the first converts,” although at the time there was no formal “religion” for them to convert to.

Conversion, *metanoia* in Greek, was about a turning of the heart. Their hearts turned toward God after they heard the full story of Jesus. Their hearts turned away from death and despair and toward hope and love.



*Loving God, help me to turn my heart toward you  
and your ways. Amen.*

Kate S. Forer, Saratoga Springs, New York

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2020

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ON THE ROAD

SCRIPTURE: ACTS 2:36–41

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## For Everyone

*For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.*

Acts 2:39

If you're anything like me, you struggle with the polarization of our nation. The "us versus them" labels lead to a persistent atmosphere of acrimony. In the book of Acts, the followers of Christ struggled with the issues of Gentiles versus Jews. They had yet to understand that God welcomed all people into this new faith family they were creating. God's promise was for everyone, not just for a certain group.

This passage makes me wonder: What might it look like to be a part of a church or a nation or a world where all people were recognized as the family of God?



*Loving God, help us to live as though these promises are indeed for everyone. Amen.*

Kate S. Forer, Saratoga Springs, New York

ON THE ROAD

SCRIPTURE: LUKE 24:13–35

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## When We Don't See

*While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him.*

Luke 24:15–16

I was complaining to a friend about someone who really gets on my nerves. It's sad but true. My friend responded, half joking, "You realize, of course, that Jesus shows up in the people who drive us nuts." We laughed, but the idea stuck with me.

Whenever I talk to anyone who begins to irritate me, I think of Jesus. I think of how much Jesus would love this person. I think of how Jesus is, in a way, hiding within them, waiting for me to discover his presence. I still feel annoyed—I can't help it; I'm human—but I take a breath and remember that sometimes Jesus shows himself. We just don't recognize him yet.



*Holy God, give me eyes to see you in the people around me. Amen.*

Kate S. Forer, Saratoga Springs, New York

FRIDAY, APRIL 24, 2020

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## ON THE ROAD

SCRIPTURE: LUKE 24:13–35

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### Hearing the Story

*He asked them, “What things?” They replied, “The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people.*

Luke 24:19

In the Gospel of Luke, important things happen while the characters move from one place to another. Luke is a Gospel that takes place on the road. In his remarkable book, *Heart and Mind, the Four-Gospel Journey for Radical Transformation* (Journey of Quadratos, 2017), Alexander John Shaia explains how each of the Gospels represents a part of the journey of faith. Matthew represents change, Mark represents suffering, Luke represents walking the road, and John represents being in the presence of God.

The story of the road to Emmaus illustrates the importance of journeying with Jesus. Sure, the disciples have been walking with Jesus for quite a while now, but the walk doesn't really begin until after the resurrection. They, and we, have to figure out how to walk the road as Easter people.



*Traveling Christ, walk the road with me. Show me the way. Amen.*

Kate S. Forer, Saratoga Springs, New York

SATURDAY, APRIL 25, 2020

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## ON THE ROAD

SCRIPTURE: LUKE 24:13–35

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### Strangers

*But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” So he went in to stay with them.*

Luke 24:29

The first time I went away to summer camp as a child, I thought to myself, “No one knows me from home. I can be anyone I want to be!” But rather than concoct an alternate identity, I chose to be myself around those strangers. That turned out to be the right decision. At the age of twelve, I discovered that I was likable and worthy of friends.

Is there something about strangers that invites us to be who we really are? In telling the story to Jesus unawares, the disciples may be more fully themselves because they thought Jesus was a stranger. Is that the reason Jesus hid from them? Did he want to see who they really were?



*Mysterious God, you know me and you love me. Help me to show hospitality to the stranger. Amen.*

Kate S. Forer, Saratoga Springs, New York

SUNDAY, APRIL 26, 2020

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FINDING OURSELVES

SCRIPTURE: LUKE 24:13–35

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## Familiarity

*When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight.*

Luke 24:30–31

The road to Emmaus story concludes with Jesus blessing and breaking the bread and with the disciples finally recognizing him as the risen Christ. He was made known to them in the breaking of bread.

Think about this story in conjunction with the story of Mary Magdalene in the garden in the Gospel of John. It's not until Jesus speaks Mary's name that she recognizes him.

There's something very mysterious about this God who hides in plain sight and then is revealed in moments of intimacy and familiarity. Where did we see God today?



*Holy and mysterious God, may we discover you in the world around us. Amen.*

Kate S. Forer, Saratoga Springs, New York

FINDING OURSELVES

SCRIPTURE: PSALM 23

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## Journey of Faith

*The LORD is my shepherd . . .*

Psalm 23:1

Often, words fail us when we try to describe God! That's why stories, metaphors, parables, and poems might be more appropriate. We have to find *some* way to talk about God. But we also have to be careful, because in our desire to understand, in our attempts to grasp mystery, God might end up being made in *our* image.

Psalm 23 is built around the image of God as the Good Shepherd. As a shepherd, God travels with us. We and the Holy One are traveling over the beautiful earth and making our way in faith. It's an image of God that feels true. If God is with us, we journey with courage. If God provides for us, we journey with generous hearts. If God welcomes us home, we journey with confidence.



*Good Shepherd, continue to lead me and to walk  
with me through all terrain and seasons. Amen.*

Kate S. Forer, Saratoga Springs, New York

TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 2020

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FINDING OURSELVES

SCRIPTURE: PSALM 23

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## Pilgrimage

*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD  
my whole life long.*

Psalm 23:6

The spiritual life is not about a destination but about an unfolding. We join in a relationship with something bigger than our own selves, a mystery that we call God. It's an inner pilgrimage. In the Twenty-Third Psalm, we are called not only to rest in the presence of God but also to walk *with* God, who leads us. Spirituality is a relationship with a mysterious God whom we cannot pin down or define, who is elusive and moving.

Psalm 23 is an invitation to a pilgrimage with the one who travels with us through green pastures to still waters and through the darkest valleys of our lives. It is a relationship and a journey and a great adventure with the mysterious and Holy One who calls us all home.



*God of all being, shape me, lead me, make me yours.  
Amen.*

Kate S. Forer, Saratoga Springs, New York

FINDING OURSELVES

SCRIPTURE: JOHN 10:1–10

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## Neglectful Shepherds

*So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them.”*

John 10:7–8

Jesus tells his disciples that he is the Good Shepherd during a time when they find themselves surrounded by bad shepherds. These leaders cared more about winning favor with Rome and keeping themselves rich than about empowering their people and helping them to have abundant life.

It is into this world of bad shepherds that Jesus arrived. It was a world where the people were tossed aside to fend for themselves and where shepherds ignored the weak or lost their sheep. Even today, we encounter neglectful shepherds. And yet Jesus has come and Jesus lives, still enduring as our Good Shepherd. We need to listen to his voice as he listens to ours.



*God, help us listen. Amen.*

Kate S. Forer, Saratoga Springs, New York

THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 2020

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## FINDING OURSELVES

SCRIPTURE: 1 PETER 2:19–25

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### Going Astray

*For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.*

1 Peter 2:25

Have you ever gone astray? Started living a life that God did not intend for you? Most of us, if not all of us, have had glimpses of this. Some of us have strayed big time and found our way back. Some of us are still wandering out in the wilderness. I know a lot of people who have struggled with addiction and whose struggle have led them down a path of pain and despair.

But I have also watched as they found the Good Shepherd, regained their footing, and discovered life abundant. Wherever you are in your life, whether your feet are squarely on the path or wandering somewhere else, know that the Good Shepherd calls to you and would like you to come home. The Good Shepherd never gives up on us.



*God, when we get distracted and find ourselves wandering, guide our hearts back to you. Amen.*

Kate S. Forer, Saratoga Springs, New York



