

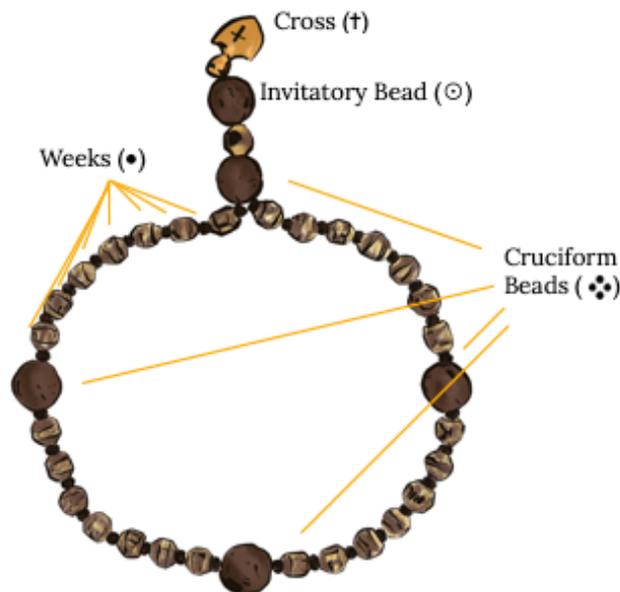
PRAYING THE LECTIONARY

Proper 25, Year A

These prayer practices can be used at any time during the week. They are meant for personal devotion and contemplation.

Anglican Rosary Prayers

The Anglican Rosary consists of a cross or crucifix (†), an invitational bead (⊙), four cruciform beads (❖), and twenty-eight beads broken into groups of seven, called the weeks (•). To pray the rosary, start with the cross, move to the invitational bead, and then move around the circle, saying the prayers for the cruciform beads and the beads in the weeks. After praying this circle, return to the invitational bead to say the benediction, and then to the cross for the doxology.



For this week, use these phrases from the lectionary readings as you pray the rosary:

† Help us speak, not to please mortals, but to please you, as you test our hearts.

⊙ (Invocation) You have let us see the promised land.

❖ You sweep us away like a dream; we fade away suddenly like the grass.

• Show your servants your works and your splendor to their children.

⊙ (Benediction) You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

† Glory to the One Holy and Undivided Trinity. As it was in the beginning is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina is an ancient method of praying with scripture. It consists of four movements. To explain it, I like using the image of a monastic scribe, laboring in a scriptorium. To begin, you need to choose a passage of scripture to pray with. Any of the readings from this week will do. Find a quiet place, open to the reading, and begin.

Movement One, Lectio: Read the passage slowly. Then read it again. Listen for a word or phrase that really speaks to you. If you were a scribe during the middle ages, you'd be copying the words out onto vellum, with no delete button! You'd have to go slowly and concentrate on every word.

Movement Two, *Meditatio*: Pay attention to thoughts, feelings, memories, and images that arise in your mind. This movement is a little like the wool-gathering that scribes might be doing as they worked.

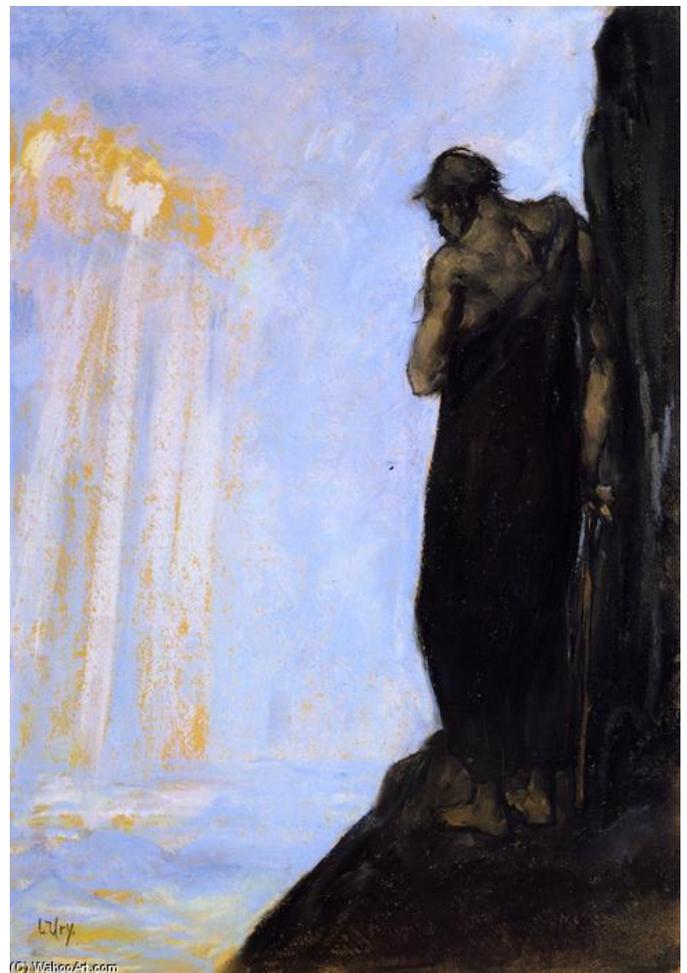
Movement Three, *Oratio*: Reply to God. This is what we usually do when we pray, and most people are used to talking to God. Our scribe might find that she's mumbling about her life and her family and friends as she leans over the vellum.

Movement Four, *Contemplatio*: Rest in God. This is prayer without words, and really without thoughts. Contemplative prayer, when time seems suspended and you're simply aware of the room around you and the vast, moving universe enveloping you. It's very hard to reach this state, but always something to practice getting to. Our scribe might let the stylus drop at this point and just rest, open-mouthed, at her desk.

Visio Divina (Praying with Images)

This is like *Lectio Divina*, but it uses images instead of words. On this and the following pages, you will find several images that you may want to pray with. The practice of *Visio Divina* consists of these steps:

1. Examine the image slowly, noting the colors, people, places and things. Remain with the image for one to two minutes. If you would like, jot down a few words about the image.
2. Take a second, deeper, look. Where do you see movement in the image? What relationships do you see? Engage your imagination. Where are you in the artwork? What do you see from that perspective? What deeper meaning emerges?
3. Respond to the image with prayer. Did the image remind you of an experience, person or issue for which you'd like to offer thanksgiving or intercession? Offer that prayer to God.
4. Find your quiet center. Breathe deeply. Relax your shoulders, arms and legs. Rest in this quiet. Let God pray in you. God prays beyond words.



Lesser Ury, Moses on Mt. Nebo Looking at the Promised Land, 1927.



Marc Chagall, Moses Views the Promised Land

Guided Meditation

You can use this guided meditation to reflect on some of the themes from this week's homily. Find a quiet place to sit or lay down. Read through this meditation, or let Karl guide you through it by listening to this recording.

Remember a time when everything flowed for you, when you were immersed in some activity that you love and were able to recognize how beautiful and pleasing it was to be yourself in that moment. Where were you? What did the environment around you look like? Were there specific scents or sounds? Who was with you? If you were alone, what did your solitude feel like? If you were with other people, how did their presence contribute to your sense of rightness in that moment? How did the activity you were doing feel in your body? Did it involve your

hands? Your breath? Your legs? Your whole body?

Now remember a time when you did something wrong. This doesn't need to be a particularly traumatic memory. You don't need to relive the worst moment of your life. Just some typical everyday wrongness that nonetheless affected you deeply. Who was with you in that moment? How did they react to the thing you did? What did their face look like? How did their posture change? What did they say to you, and how did you respond? If you were alone, where did the sense of wrongness come from? Were you doing something you'd sworn you wouldn't do? Were you breaking some covenant you'd made with yourself, or with God? Did you realize that what you were doing was wrong in the moment, or only afterwards? If afterwards, how did the wrongness become clear to you?

Now remember the story of how you reconciled with God, your neighbor, and yourself after you acted wrongly. If you haven't reconciled, begin to imagine how you might. How did your body feel as you prepared to admit your fault and ask for forgiveness? Was this a tense

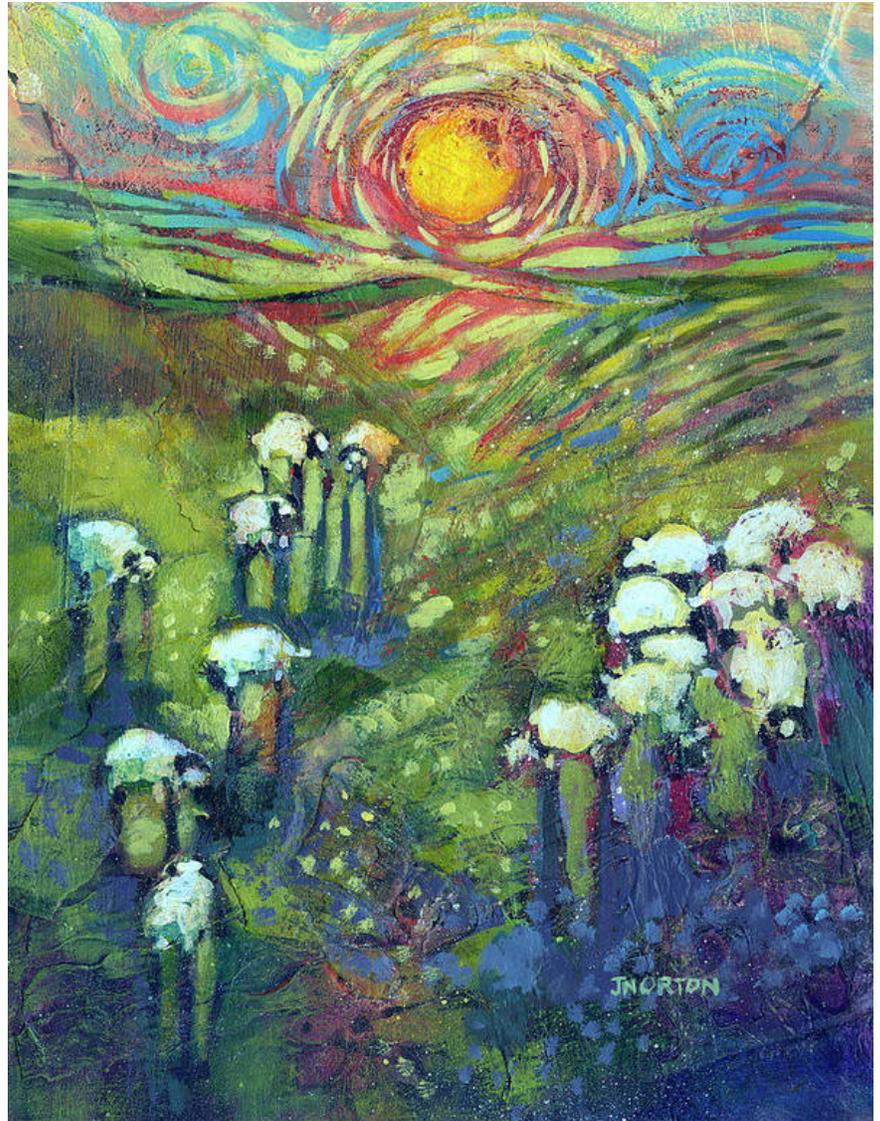
moment? If so, where did your body hold that tension? What location did you choose for this act of reconciliation? Why did you choose it? What did the space look like, smell like, sound like? Who, besides you, was there in this moment of reconciliation? Maybe someone from your past came into your mind and stood, metaphorically, beside you, holding your hand. Maybe you had a friend physically there with you as you sought reconciliation with the person you wronged. What qualities did these people – our mentors, friends, teachers – bring into the moment that helped you to reconcile? If you were reconciling with another person, how did they react to your attempt at reconciliation? What did their face look like? What did they say? Have you continued your relationship with them, or have you agreed with them to release that relationship?

Now take three breaths. With each breath, breathe in slowly, filling your body as much as possible. Hold the breath for a count of three. Then breath out slowly, until your body feels entirely empty of breath.

Ask for absolution, and end with prayer:

Loving God, have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life.

Live without fear: your Creator has made you holy, has always protected you, and loves you as a mother. Go in peace to follow the good road and may God's blessing be with you always.



Jen Norton, Flock in the Promised Land.