



# Lenten Reflection 2021

## A Companion Piece

*The Time is Now:  
A Call to Uncommon Courage*  
Joan Chittister, osb

The following materials are suggested for use with Joan Chittister's book, *The Time is Now: A Call to Uncommon Courage*. Each week's Reflection(s), Discussion and Action are tied to a chapter in the book that aligns with the Sunday Gospel for that week. It is recommended that you read the chapter and the Gospel beforehand.

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## First Sunday of Lent

### Chapter 15--Faith

Sunday Gospel—Mark 1:12-15

#### Reflections

Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase. *Martin Luther King Jr.*

Your ways, o God, are love and truth to those who keep your covenant. *Psalms 25*

Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing's going to get better. It's not.

*Dr. Seuss*

Be not a whisper that is lost in the wind; be a voice that is heard above the storms of life.

*Maimonides*

I believe, help my unbelief! *Mark 9:24*

#### For Discussion

"Tomorrow is the gift we are given to create for ourselves." Does this statement by the author give you a different perspective about your days? How might we encourage that point of view for ourselves and others?

How might one lead those who don't want to be led? Without judgement...

The Gospel for Sunday of the First Week of Lent reminds us that "This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand." How can we imbed this age-old message into our everyday practice?

#### Activity

Spend some time with Sunday's first reading (Genesis 9:8—15) considering God's faithfulness.



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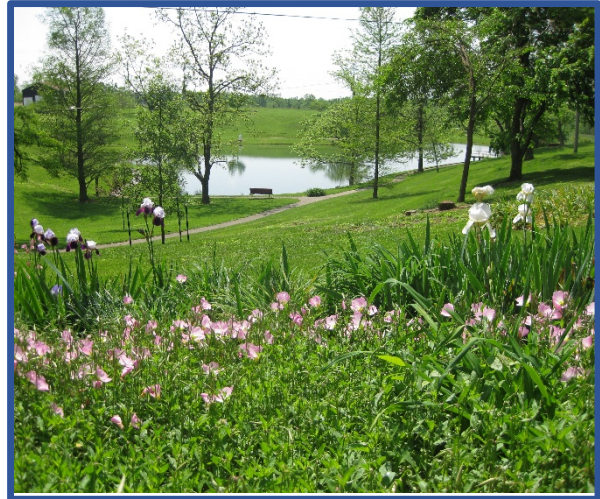
## Second Week of Lent

### Chapter 13—Proclamation

#### Sunday Gospel—Mark 9:2-10

##### Reflection

Was this Sunday's Gospel about the transfiguration a story of teasing? Maybe? maybe not? The cost of proclamation is enormous. We don't earn it. It is all gift. In following Jesus, the cost of walking with Him in all the sufferings of the world may not take us up a high mountain in the Holy Land or even in the Colorado Rockies. Just as the followers of Jesus were, we must be transformed on the streets where we walk.



Today's readings describe the glory of God as revealed to a wandering migrant, to newly converted pagans, and to simple fishermen, all living lives that were quite ordinary. The accounts remind us that God is revealed to us as well. The challenge today is the same as it always was. We must have new eyes that see beyond what we usually see. And new words beyond what we usually say.

Who was transfigured that day on the mountain? Jesus or the disciples? Or both? The disciples were thrown into the darkness, not for want of light but for surplus light. That day, the disciples were called by God and they understood as best they could. Transfiguration calls us to a new life, not an old one. This is my beloved son. Listen to him!

##### For Discussion

“Fight for the things that you care about, but do it in a way that will bring others to join you.”

*Ruth Bader Ginsburg.*

Once a person has been transfigured, the only path is the one walked by Jesus – the path of self-giving and self-surrender. We are then inspired to pour ourselves out in love. What do you bring to this time in our pandemic world? What do you love?

What is it you want to proclaim today? Who will you tell?

##### Action

Share a time when faith compelled you to take a step you have never taken before.

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## Third Week of Lent

### Chapter 5—Audacity

#### Sunday Gospel--Mark 9:2-10

#### Reflections

In every artist there is a touch of audacity without which no talent is conceivable. *Goethe*

One thing is certain, if we merge mercy with might, and might with right, then love becomes our legacy, and change, our children's birthright. *Amanda Gorman,*

The difference between a vision and a daydream is the audacity to act. *Steven Furtick*

From the shining cloud God's voice is heard; This is my beloved, listen to him. *Matthew 7:5*

A ship in a harbor is safe, but that's not what ships are built for. *John A. Shedd*

#### For Discussion

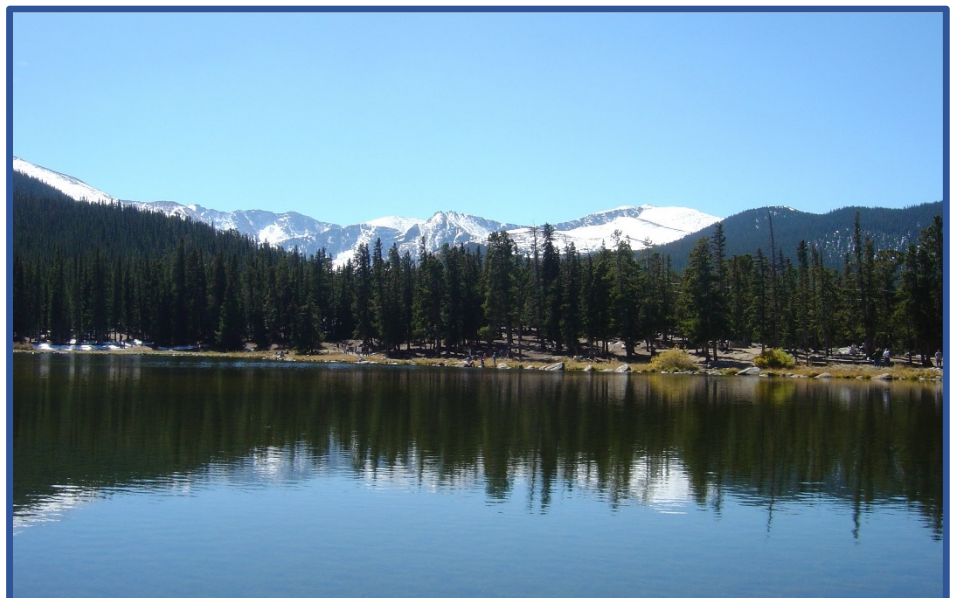
How comfortable are you with the role of prophet? Can you share a time when you might have fit the description of a prophet?

Prophets "judge no one, . . . They attack no persons and assume that all of us operate out of good motives." How's that working for you?

"Despair" is a very harsh word and although we may not have experienced it in the extreme, perhaps we've walked that fine line between hope and no hope. At times like that, how do you hold steady? (whether or not you acknowledge your prophetic role.)

#### Action

Our hope has probably suffered a little this year. Take some time to consider what nurtures y/our hope. How we can encourage, rebuild, strengthen those components of our personal and communal spiritual life?



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## Fourth Week of Lent

### Chapter 14—Vision

#### Sunday Gospel—John 3:14-21

#### Reflection

The realization of God’s love for us comes as a life-changing, liberating moment. Jesus announced his ministry as one of setting people free from the effects of sin and darkness to enjoy a life of complete freedom and eternal salvation. We need to pay attention. We need to see.

**When your vision has gone,  
no part of the world can find you.  
It's time to go into the dark  
where the night has eyes  
to recognize its own.  
There you can be sure  
you are not beyond love.  
The dark will be your home  
tonight.**

*From the poem, Sweet Darkness  
by David Whyte*



#### For Discussion

Where might you broaden your thinking and see with new eyes? What might we learn from the prophets about living God’s vision today?

Joy comes to us in ordinary miracles. We risk missing out when we get too busy chasing down the extraordinary. Looking back, what did you miss and now wish you had seen?

Only when we are brave enough to explore the darkness will we discover the infinite power of our light. *Brené Brown*

#### Action

Go outside at night and experience the sky, filled with the mystery of infinity. See how we are a tiny part of the whole galaxy. Feel the wonder of God and the gift of being alive. The only way to grasp it is in the dark, for the dark holds everything – even the questions we cannot answer. The light and dark exist always. *“The dark will be your home tonight.”*

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## Fifth Week of Lent

### Chapter 3—Awareness

#### Sunday Gospel—John 12:20-33

#### Reflections

The whole idea of compassion is based on a keen awareness of the interdependence of all these living beings, which are all part of one another and all involved in one another. *Thomas Merton*

There is a voice that doesn't use words. Listen. *Rumi*

Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity. *Simone Weil*

When day comes, we step out of the shade aflame and unafraid. The new dawn blooms as we free it. For there is always light. If only we're brave enough to see it. If only we're brave enough to be it. *Amanda Gorman*

Rather than being your thoughts and emotions, be the awareness behind them. *Eckhart Tolle*

Awareness is like the sun. When it shines on things, they are transformed. *Thich Nhat Hanh*

#### For Discussion

"It is *the times we live in* that are our call to courage." When the "times" overwhelm us/you, where might we/you find the strength and the courage to carry on?

Share a time when you followed Mary Oliver's instructions for life: "Pay attention, Be astonished. Tell about it."

How have you "enlarged your life?"



#### Action

"Prophetic spirituality requires us to think and study about causes." We are encouraged to study the causes for injustices we see today. Where in your life could you be more intentional about this and what next step do you need to take now toward that end? Make a plan.

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## Sixth Week of Lent

### Chapter 8—Self-Giving

#### Sunday Gospel—Mark 14:1-15, 47

#### Reflection

Prophets among us are not agitators, anarchists or traitors. They call us to be our best selves. They confront us with “the deep-down goodness of our common call to holiness, to love of neighbor, to commitment to the life of the whole world.” (Joan Chittister) They don’t seek violence. But when conflict and violence come, they come down on the prophet’s own head—they “lay down their lives for their friends.”

#### For Discussion

Jesus’ journey is a model for his followers, though we each experience it in different ways. The disciples, like us, only learned gradually who Jesus was. Whatever certainties they had were thrown into crises at the Last Supper and days that followed to the crucifixion. Yet beyond this disorientation came experiences of the Risen Christ. We know the story. We know the powerful promise. The Passion of Jesus leads us to be transformed by God’s love, giving us the strength to walk outward, sharing that love with others. Good is stronger than evil. Love triumphs over hate. Life conquers death. There is mystery for sure. And grace. Always grace.



Until we can receive with an open heart, we're never really **giving** with an open heart. When we attach judgment to receiving help, we knowingly or unknowingly attach judgment to **giving** help. Belonging starts with **self**-acceptance. *Brené Brown*

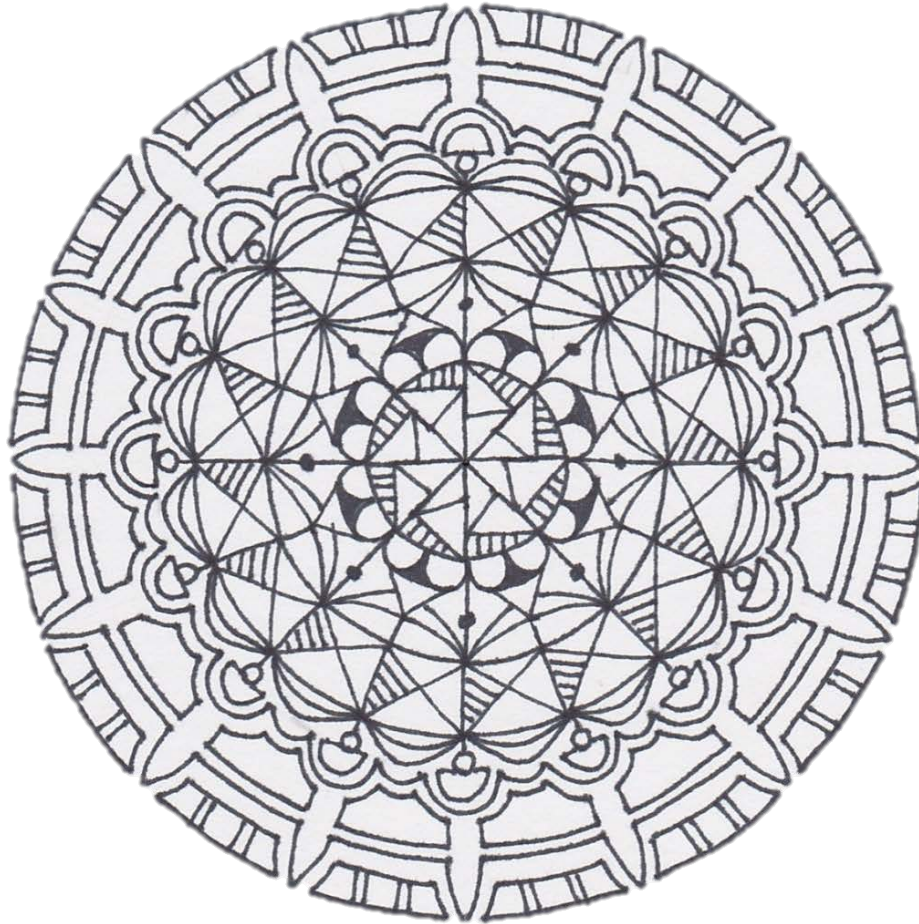
In self-giving we touch a rhythm not only of all creation but of all beings. It is the foundation of a generous person. A person who has the gift of self-giving is like sun in a community.

Brené Brown says, “Courage is contagious. Every time we choose courage, we make everyone around us a little better and the world a little better. We need to remember: we don’t have to do it all alone. We were never meant to.”

What would you be glad you did... even if you failed? Note to self: I think I could tell somebody this story...

### Action

Sandy Ardoyno once said, "I believe in a world where we can make and share art and sometimes words that will help us find our way back to one another." What would you like to create and what will you do with it? Get your markers out and start now!



**Happy Easter!**

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