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## Daily Meditations

### July 27-August 1, 2020

The Biblical readings are taken from the Daily Office in the Book of Common Prayer for Year 2 and written by the St. Stephen's Meditation Writing Team: Dave Boyd, Becky Denton, Pat Gillory, Traci Maxwell, Jay Nickel, Bob Reed, T.Cay Rowe, and Carroll Wilson.

Click on the scripture reading for each day to go directly to link.

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## COLLECT, PROPER 12

*O God, the protector of all who trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: Increase and multiply upon us your mercy; that, with you as our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we lose not the things eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

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## PROLOGUE

*It is mid-July as I write these meditations. The virus is raging across Texas and most of the rest of the nation. Yesterday was my 72nd birthday. I'm trying to sort out my thoughts and feelings about the whole thing. I'm angry. It did not have to be this bad! People have been hurt and have died unnecessarily. My hope and my prayer is that we begin now to manage this plague medically and scientifically and in the best interest of all our citizens—and stop managing it politically and in the best interest of Disney World and United Airlines.*

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## They Got the Entire Brigade Together for Some Fun

Monday, July 27, 2020

### Matthew 27:24-31

*"They knelt before him in mocking reverence...they spit on him and hit him on the head..When they'd had their fun...they proceeded out to the crucifixion." - The Message*

Pilate has now washed his hands, pardoned a crook, and thrown Jesus to the wolves. When I read what was done to my friend, Jesus, I see visions. I see men in the back of a pickup truck "going hunting" for a jogger of color—in the same way I hunted rabbits at night with my father some 60+ years ago. I see public servants performing before a camera and mocking the choke-holds that killed a man. And I am ashamed that this has happened on "my watch."

Jesus, help me to help change things. Thank you Jesus (TYJ)

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## A Cautionary Statement

Tuesday, July 28, 2020

## **Romans 16:17-27**

*"One final word of counsel friends. Keep a sharp eye out for those who would take bits and pieces of the teachings (of Jesus) that you learned, and then use them to make trouble. Give those people a wide berth. They have no intention of living for our Master Christ. They're only in this for what they can get out of it, and aren't above using pious sweet talk to dupe unsuspecting innocents." - The Message*

Can you picture a photo op here? Paul is instructing the Roman Christians to be on guard and not be duped. I wonder just how many times in the last three months that I have been privy to pious sweet talk from leaders at every level of government trying to downplay and direct attention away from the severity of our current plague? Science has been rejected in favor of "spin." And for what? Is it because one needs to be in lock step with someone in power? Is it because the temporary economic health of Wall Street is more important than the physical health of a nation? Is Disney World really more important than the Navajo Nation?

No longer can we afford to be unsuspecting innocents! TYJ

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## **Luke's Task in the Writing of Acts**

Wednesday, July 29, 2020

### **Acts 1:1-14**

*"They agreed they were in this for good." - The Message*

In the Introduction to Acts in *The Message Bible*, the purpose of its writing is laid out in very plain language. The author(s) of this Introduction states: "We could easily become spectators, and then let it go at that—become admirers of Jesus, generous with our Oohs and Aahs, and (only) in our better moments inspired to imitate Him."

It is Luke's job in Acts to prevent the foregoing spectator scenario. Again, in the Introduction, the author(s) states: "The story of Jesus doesn't end with Jesus. It is meant to continue in the lives and in the actions of all of us."

And so, these disciples who are meeting in secret (after the crucifixion) to elect a disciple to replace Judas, decide they are "in it for good."

What I often lack is the inspiration to become less of a spectator and more of an imitator of Jesus—"in it for good."

Help me, Jesus. TYJ

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## **Joseph of Arimathea**

Thursday, July 30, 2020

### **Matthew 27:55-66**

*"Joseph, a wealthy man from Arimathea and a disciple of Jesus...went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body...put it in his own tomb...and rolled a large stone across the entrance." - The Message*

Because of his wealth and position, Joseph was not likely to be refused his request to Pilate for the body of Jesus. Just the same, for Joseph it was a risky act, sure to bring criticism, scorn, and perhaps danger to Joseph. But Joseph was a man of action. In so doing, he cemented his adherence to the teachings of Jesus—for all to see. He was no "enthusiastic spectator." He was "in it for good."

He was an "imitator of Jesus." I (we) can learn from Joseph. TYJ

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## Risen from the Dead

Friday, July 31, 2020

### Matthew 28:1-10

*"The angel spoke to the women. 'There is nothing to fear here. I know you are looking for Jesus—the One they nailed to the cross. He is not here. He was raised, just as he said'." - The Message*

I think that there are at least two threads of this story that I greatly like. First of all, I do want desperately to believe in angels. My angels are not clothed in dazzling white with shafts of light blazing from them. My angels look ordinary but are surely dispatched to save and comfort. Secondly, I love the reaction of Mary of Magdalene upon seeing that the tomb is empty. She and the other two women with her are charged with the task of going back to tell the disciples that Jesus is risen.

But there is a snippet to this story that is told in the Book of John. It is a lynchpin for me. In John's version, Mary is greatly distressed by the empty tomb and angrily addresses a man whom she thinks is the gardener, asking him where he has laid the body. In fact, the gardener is really Jesus, and He is instantly revealed to Mary when He calls her by name—"Mary."

I know precisely how Mary felt at that very moment. TYJ

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## The Cooked-Up Story

Saturday, August 1, 2020

### Matthew 28:11-20

*"The guards, a few of them, went into the city and told the high priests everything that had happened. They called a meeting of the religious leaders and came up with a plan." - The Message*

Here we have the leaders of the day manufacturing a different (alternative) version of the truth from what they were told by witnesses. It is a version that serves their needs much better than that which was witnessed.

Seems to me that self-serving alternative truths about our current plague have been manufactured by some of our leaders almost daily. They are meant to replace medical and scientific truths that are far less palatable to those same leaders. Let's look at what is at stake here—reputations and egos versus lives. Time to stop repeating mistakes of the past. TYJ

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