

## **Lenten Prayer, March 8, 2020 (Vreny Mathis)**

As a people of faith we continue in prayer,

In today's reading we hear Mark's account of Jesus' final journey to Jerusalem. The mood within the group must have been one of doom rather than comfort. The future, Jesus tells his disciples, will bring suffering and persecution. Discipleship means no preferential treatment or special rewards. Instead, the mark of true discipleship will be a commitment to serve the common good.

As we journey through Lent, we too are on the road to Jerusalem. Coming together in prayer and reflection, we too are reminded of the meaning of discipleship. We pray to learn from the words of scripture, and be steadfast in our promise to be of service, to love, to heal and empower.

We pray to be a generous and welcoming people, both within our community and the world at large. We ask for courage to be bridge builders; diligently working towards inclusiveness and reconciliation; to embrace all of humanity. We pray to truly live in mutual care and respect; to partake in each other's dreams, hopes and fears.

Traditionally, Lent has also been a call to simplicity and moderation. We are challenged to examine our wants and needs. It's a time to pause and review our choices and preferences. We pray to keep in mind fair wages, as well as safe and healthy working conditions for all who produce our good and services. May we consume our fair share only, choose our purchases wisely and minimize harmful impacts on the environment.

Loving God, we bring before you the needs of your people. We grieve for the countries and individuals afflicted by COVID -19. May those affected find hope, strength and healing? May health authorities find effective responses, and, may calm heads and moderation prevail.

We carry in our hearts those who are living in areas of ongoing violence and conflict. We hope that world leaders find lasting solutions to an ever increasing refugee crisis.

We pray to respond with resolve to situation of violence amongst our own midst.

Amongst the many needs, let us also recognize times of joy and grace. Live giving God, we give thanks for those close to us, for the blessings we have in each other. May we extend that goodwill to the community at large and go on in service and compassion.

May it be so, Amen?