

JESUS  
MY REFUGE  
MY LIFE



LENTEN PACKAGE



# #OYPLentenProject21

The purpose of this Booklet is to allow each of us to be intentional in our Lenten journeys through offering up every single day in prayerful reflection. Wherever we may be in our own spiritual journeys, this Booklet is an invitation for us to take ownership of our faith, and to begin to witness the love of God in a season of renewal and homecoming.

We encourage you to share this resource with your own communities, cell groups, friends and families and use this Booklet to pray together with the people around you. If you are using this Booklet as your personal Lenten commitment, we encourage you to also share God's goodness with those whom you feel prompted to reach out to at the end of each week.

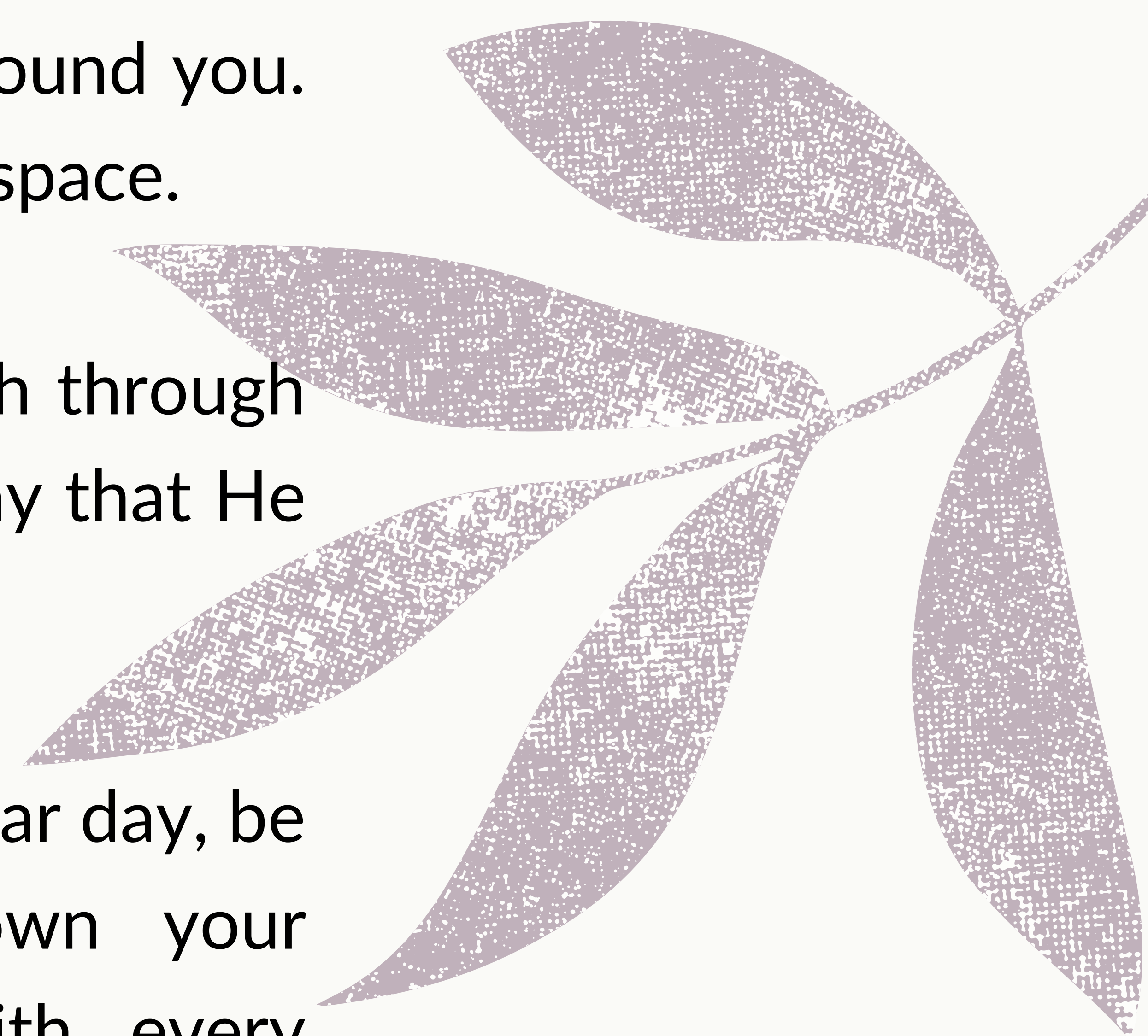
## how to use this booklet?

Find a quiet space and remove any form of distraction around you. Open up with a prayer, inviting the Lord to enter into this space.

Slowly read through the material for the day. Do not rush through the material, but allow the Lord to speak to you in the way that He desires.

If there are reflection questions/ activities for that particular day, be honest and vulnerable with God when writing down your responses. As much as possible, follow through with every reflection question/ activity – let that be your commitment to God for this entire Booklet.

After your reflection/ activity has been concluded for the day, say a short prayer giving thanks to God for the grace that He has given you to be present with Him in the moment.









Amen! For your efforts in preparing yourself for the Lord's Passion and resurrection. The Lord sees you and affirms you for the struggles you have gone through in the last few weeks.

This week, as we enter into the final days of Lent - before the beginning of Holy Week and Easter, we remain focused on purification and cleansing through the acts of Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving. Scripture also reminds us that to follow Christ is not an easy task and it requires dying to oneself to have our wholehearted gaze on our Lord.

Therefore, brothers and sisters in Christ, let us persevere for the Lord, bearing our crosses, knowing fully that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. God Bless.

*'Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."*

*- Matthew 16:24*





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# Sunday of the Fifth Week of Lent

## **gospel**

*If a grain of wheat falls on the ground and dies, it yields a rich harvest. Among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. These approached Philip, who came from Bethsaida in Galilee, and put this request to him, 'Sir, we should like to see Jesus.' Philip went to tell Andrew, and Andrew and Philip together went to tell Jesus. Jesus replied to them:*

*"Now the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you, most solemnly, unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest. Anyone who loves his life loses it; anyone who hates his life in this world will keep it for the eternal life. If a man serves me, he must follow me, wherever I am, my servant will be there too. If anyone serves me, my Father will honour him.*

*Now my soul is troubled. What shall I say:*

*Father, save me from this hour? But it was for this very reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name!' A voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.'*

*People standing by, who heard this, said it was a clap of thunder; others said, 'It was an angel speaking to him.' Jesus answered, 'It was not for my sake that this voice came, but for yours. Now sentence is being passed on this world; now the prince of this world is to be overthrown. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all men to myself.'*

*By these words he indicated the kind of death he would die.*

*// JOHN 12: 20-33*





# Sunday of the Fifth Week of Lent

## reflection

Are we afraid of death? In today's Gospel, Jesus asks us to reflect on dying. Death can feel daunting – we do not want to let go of all that we have built up on earth. All of our possessions, all of our achievements, all of our relationships. Death strips us of all these things and we will be left with nothing but ourselves.

Except we won't – we will be left with God. So, are we prepared for that?

Lent gives us a chance to prepare for death. During Lent, we are called to strip ourselves of all of these things – these obsessions – that do not belong in our lives. Through our Lenten commitments, we are learning how to live our lives without clutching on to all these unnecessary things that distract us from God. We are learning how to live without these things because they lead us further from God. Instead, Lent is a time for us to live intentionally and purposefully, and to turn away from our obsessions and to turn towards God.

“Unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest.” Death may be scary (both literally and figuratively), but God wants so much more for us than what we think we have. The life we are living now may be good by all our human measures, but is it good by God's measures? God calls us to die to ourselves and strip ourselves of all our worldly things, because He is calling us for so much more than this ordinary life. He is calling for us to thrive.

## questions

1. What am I still clinging on to this Lent - something that is taking time and intentionality away from God?
2. Am I letting Jesus fill the gaps of my heart and mind that were once filled with these earthly things? Or have I filled them with new distractions?





# Monday of the Fifth Week of Lent

## prayer

### *Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi*

*Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
Where there is injury, pardon;  
Where there is doubt, faith;  
Where there is despair, hope;  
Where there is darkness, light;  
Where there is sadness, joy.*

*O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive;  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
it is in dying to self that we are born to eternal life.  
Amen.*





# Tuesday of the Fifth Week of Lent

## resource

***Meditation on Death by St Francis De Sales from a presentation by Matt Fradd***

Click [here](#) to access the video! The reflection begins at "27:26" but feel free to watch the full session (highly encouraged!) if you can.

## reflection

Death. A topic that is not frequently broached and avoided for its morbidity. We don't like to think that we may one day die and prefer to simply assume we will be around tomorrow. Why? The imminence of death reveals to us the poverty and emptiness of our worldly lives which irks us but is precisely why we should meditate on death and would like you to ponder more deeply on it - a second time in this booklet.

The meditation reveals how attached we are to our present worldly pursuits. The world often teaches us to strive for success i.e. to attain a good career, a good reputation, or have financial security, and we would be satisfied. As such, it is still so easy for us to become too fixated on these goals that we forget from whom is our sufficiency. Unfortunately, we even forsake the Lord for such pursuits, not realising that these are only transient things that disappear if we were to pass on today.

However, beyond revealing the folly of our worldly lives, we posit that this meditation of death also elicits a sense of hope. It provides a firm reminder of the core of the Christian message that Jesus our Lord has granted us salvation to have eternal life in him; there is a future beyond this life and there exists a place of eternal bliss in the vision of our God. Therefore, let us be resolute in following our Lord and live this life for him!





# Tuesday of the Fifth Week of Lent

## activity

1. Pen down your experience of this meditation of death
2. Make firm your spiritual resolutions inspired through the meditation and write out the concrete steps you may take to achieve a 'happy death'

*Why should I love things of this world  
with a love that death can end?*

St Francis De Sales





# Wednesday of the Fifth Week of Lent

## fasting

During Lent, we are called to fast so that we may make an intentional act of denying a human need/want, to remember that we can only be fully sustained by our infinite and loving creator. As fasting helps us to focus our gaze on the Lord and not on worldly things, prayer comes together hand in hand with fasting.

**Today's challenge is to lift up a Holy Hour to the Lord**, without friends or your phone – just you and Jesus. With the generally frantic schedules of our fast-paced Singaporean lifestyle, we often find it difficult to even set aside time for our friends and family, let alone our Lord. Therefore, today's challenge is to surrender a whole hour to the Lord and be in prayer with him.

We will encourage you not to break up this one hour block as the purpose is to sincerely give the time to the Lord rather than keep thinking “what am I going to do after this”. Should you need to break up the hour, do keep it to a single split of two 30 minute blocks.

How do I improve my spiritual life?



Today

Take the time - Thomas Merton





# Thursday of the Fifth Week of Lent

## **gospel**

*The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her, 'Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you.' She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, 'Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour. Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end.'*

*Mary said to the angel, 'But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?' 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you' the angel answered 'and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God. Know this too: your kinswoman Elizabeth has, in her old age, herself conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God.' **'I am the handmaid of the Lord,' said Mary 'let what you have said be done to me.'** And the angel left her.*

// LUKE 1: 26-38





# Thursday of the Fifth Week of Lent

## reflection

Mary is a woman of great faith, a very admirable disciple of Christ. Can you imagine the fear she held after being told she was to bear God's son? Despite the overwhelming fear she felt, she holds courage and great faith to say "I am the handmaid of the Lord, let what you have said be done to me." She placed God's concern over her own, something we all struggle with.

We struggle to let God take control of our lives because of our human nature to have things in our control. We hold a lot of fear and anxiety for our future. Lies can manifest and overwhelm us in our times of struggle or failure – 'I will never be good or worthy enough.'

But God's love is so much greater than our fears and challenges. As Christians, we are called to be bearers of Christ, like Mary, but in our own small special ways to the people around us. God calls us to follow in Mary's footsteps, to take a leap of faith and trust in His plan for us, and in His time, He will give us what we deserve and reveal our purpose.

Have courage to choose God over all else, to listen and trust in His plan for us. A difficult journey but it all starts with "Lord, I want to obey You."

## questions

1. What is stopping me from fully trusting God's plan?
2. What more do I want to do for God?

## activity

Write a prayer of surrender, surrender all your worries and fears, ending it with "Lord, I want to obey You." If that may seem too direct and too soon for you to fully trust God, end it with "Lord, I want to want to obey You."





# Friday of the Fifth Week of Lent

## almsgiving

Almsgiving is a combination of prayer and fasting, to give up something to the Lord and to deny ourselves, detaching ourselves from worldly things to reach Christ. Many of us grew up to see that almsgiving was to give money to charity or even to the Church. But almsgiving is so much more than that, it is not to give out of our surplus but out of our substance. This can range from our time, our talent, our treasure, and many more.

One of the many reasons for almsgiving is to remember the dignity of each and every human being in this world regardless of how the world sees them. We are called to help and empathise with those around us simply because they exist, because they are, because they are created in God's image and likeness. The story of The Good Samaritan comes to mind, where even though the man was naked and completely beaten up, the Samaritan decided to give this stranger his time, effort and money to ensure that he is well taken care of.

### Challenge(s) of the day:

Here are three levels of "difficulty" for the almsgiving challenge, they are to be done in accumulation. Choose a tier, and make sure you do the challenge(s) in the previous tier(s) as well!

Tier 1: Set a lunch or dinner date with a friend/family dinner to check in with them

Tier 2: Spend some time to pray for them

Tier 3: Write a short message of encouragement/affirmation to them





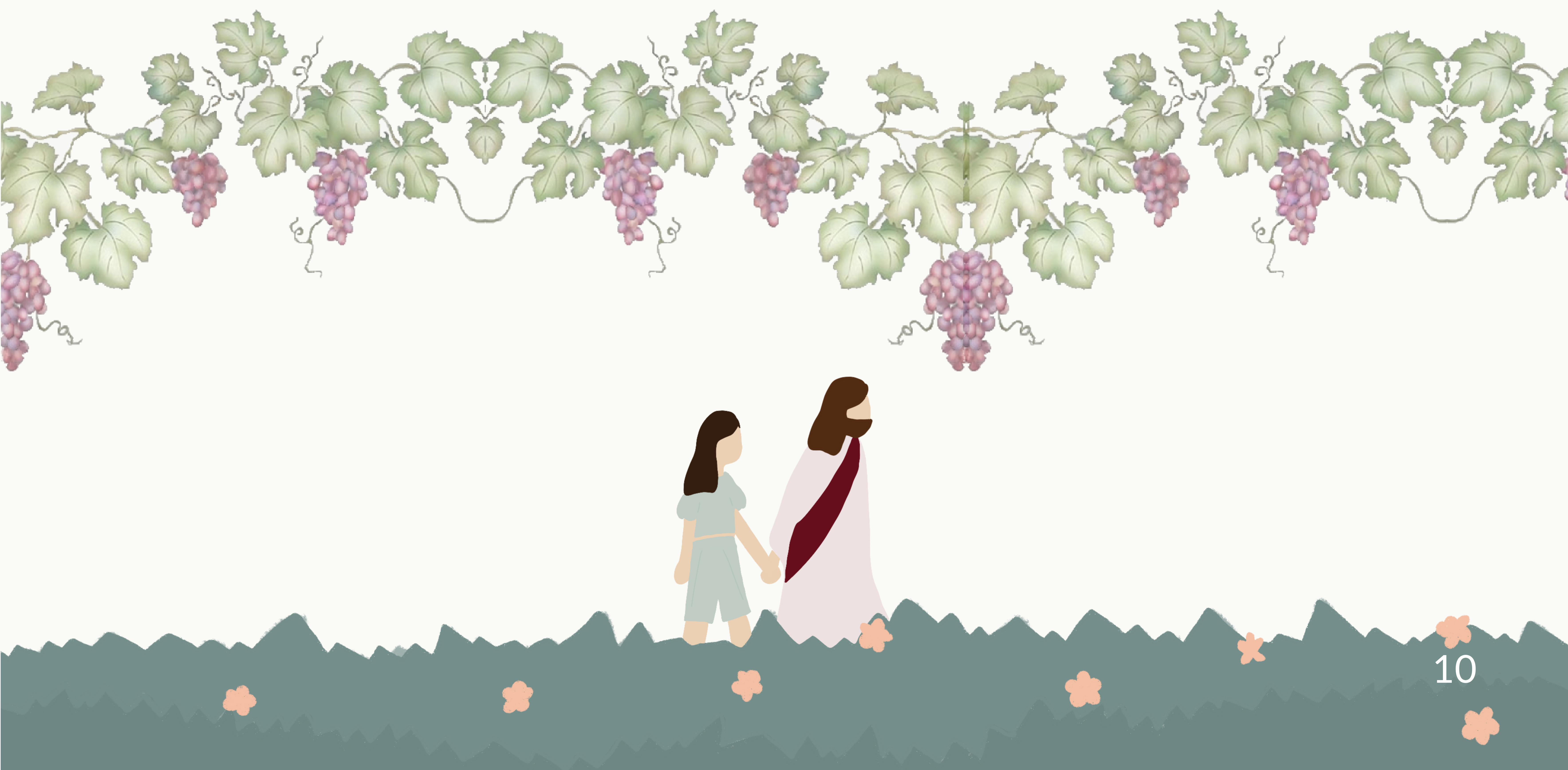
# Saturday of the Fifth Week of Lent

## guided examen

Invite God into your heart, your mind, your soul. Allow God's light to shine upon and illuminate the past week. Invite the Holy Spirit to settle around you and guide you in this reflection:

*You are walking through a vineyard. The branches and vines lightly scrape against your arms, you feel the soil beneath your feet as you walk through and observe all that happens around you. The vineyard seems to go on forever, and you gaze in wonder at the never-ending rows of vines, each at different stages of growth. Some had just been planted, some were little seedlings, some were reaching maturity, and some were being harvested and brought to be made into wine. Looking at each stage of growth, you see the vines grow almost as if on their own. But as you stand there longer, you notice an old man moving from vine to vine, carefully pruning and taking care of each one. He treats each one with such care and love that you wonder where he has the time or the energy. But the man seems so happy as he looks at each vine, each seedling, each barrel of grapes he harvests.*

*You follow the man as he carries some barrels of grapes into a barn. You begin to hear the song [New Wine](#) play:*





# Saturday of the Fifth Week of Lent

*In the crushing  
In the pressing  
You are making new wine  
In the soil I now surrender  
You are breaking new ground*

*So I yield to You and to Your careful  
hand  
When I trust You I don't need to  
understand*

*Make me Your vessel  
Make me an offering  
Make me whatever You want me to be  
I came here with nothing  
But all You have given me  
Jesus bring new wine out of me*

*In the crushing  
In the pressing  
You are making new wine  
In the soil I now surrender  
You are breaking new ground*

*Where there is new wine  
There is new power  
There is new freedom  
The Kingdom is here  
I lay down my old flames  
To carry Your new fire today*

*Make me Your vessel  
Make me an offering  
Make me whatever You want me to be  
I came here with nothing  
But all You have given me  
Jesus bring new wine out of me*

## questions

1. How have you allowed yourself to be pressed and crushed by God this past week of Lent?
2. How and what is the Lord calling you to for the upcoming Easter Season?

