

**April 9,
2017**

**PAL
M
SUND
AY**

The
Rev. J.D.
McQueen, II - All
Saints'
Episcopal
Church,
San
Diego,
CA

Today
we
enter
into
Holy
Week,
one of
the
great (if
not the
greatest
)
opportu
nities for
encount

ering
Jesus in
the
Church
year for
several
reasons:
After 40
days of
Lent,
we're in
peak
spiritual
shape or
at least
are
more
spirituall
y aware
than
usual.
- That
makes it
easier to
get
caught
up in the
zeal of
Holy
Week,
- With
the
finish in
sight,
there's a
kind of
renewin

g of
spiritual
energy
to make
a special
sacrifice

This
energy
also
comes
from a
greater
sense of
commu
nity
- Billions
of other
Christian
s
worldwi
de are
preparin
g for
Easter
- HW
liturgies
give
more
opportu
nities to
gather
as a
parish
family

Not only
that
these
liturgies
are
different
from the
usual
Sunday
Mass

-

Focused
on the
most
action-
packed,
narrativ
e
portion
of the
gospels

-

Reflecte
d in
dramatic
liturgies
that
capture
our
attentio
n, help
to
engage
our
Christian
imaginat
ion

All these things create a special atmosphere for encountering Jesus in mental prayer.

- This is more than saying our prayers or praying for others – both of which are great, so don't stop doing that.

- Mental prayer, or meditation, is different – this is

where
our
relations
hip with
Jesus
become
s
personal
.

And
when
we open
ourselves
up to
see
what
Jesus
has
done
and is
doing in
our lives
and the
lives of
others,
- we
begin to
experience
what
spiritual
writers
have
called
“fire
from
above,”
- Which
is simply
the love
of God
awakeni
ng,
illuminat
ing, and
igniting
our

human
experien
ce.

- It's us
saying
"yes" to
God's
desire to
make
our lives
shine
like the
burning
bush.

There
are
several
different
ways to
pray like
this:

You can
imagine
yourself
in the
gospel
scene,
observin
g what's
going on
or even
engagin
g it.

- One of
St
Teresa's

favorite
ways of
praying
was to
imagine
herself
with
Jesus in
the
garden
of
Gethse
mane;
- either
praying
for Him
or just
talking
to Him.

You can
practice
*"lectio
divina"*
or "holy
reading,
"

- which
is
nothing
more
than
reading
slowly
and
delibera
tely

through
the
gospels,
- and
when
something grabs
your
attention,
n,
pausing
to think
about it.

Something
that
I've
personally found
helpful
is taking
a
passage
of
scripture
and
prayerfully
putting
it in
your
own
words,
as if you
were
simply
acting as

a
witness,
trying to
tell
someon
e what
happene
d
[I've put
together
/printed
out...]
Don't
worry
about
not
doing it
right –
simply
giving
that
time to
God is a
success.
- And
when it
seems
like a
struggle,
like
nothing'
s
happeni
ng and
you
want to
quit,

recognize that you have another great opportunity: to stay with Jesus even though you'd rather be doing something else, and to console Him for no reason other than love.

-

Imagine yourself with Jesus in the garden, when all the other disciples

have
fallen
asleep;
- Or
during
his trial,
scourgin
g, or
crownin
g with
thorns,
when
the
other
disciples
have
scattere
d

-
Imagine
yourself
helping
to carry
the
cross, or
standing
at the
foot of
the
cross.

Don't be
surprise
d or get
frustrate
d or
discoura

ged if
this is
difficult
or you
forget –
just start
again.
And
rememb
er
especiall
y that
St.
James
tells us,
“Draw
near to
God and
He will
draw
near to
you,”
which
means
that if
we’ll
just
open
our
hearts,
Jesus
will be
happy to

enter
into us.