

Reflection

A thaw is coming! For the first time in weeks, I can see grass outside my window. The tips of spring flower shoots are also making their first appearance. Though I enjoy the snow – walking taller because it is deep and crusted under my feet; the changes in the landscape each new layer brings, especially as they pile up; the chance to see the art in snow and ice that the wind and temperature changes create; the black lace leafless trees paint on the sky – it is a hopeful sign to see the green of life appear from beneath winter's white blanket. There is always the reminder that we cannot have one without the other. Just as nature needs the winter freeze to help generate the new growth of spring, we need the respite of time for meditation and reflection to invigorate us for new endeavors and to renew our continuing efforts to serve our Savior as his disciples.

As Lent continues, we reflect on the road Jesus took from the manger to the cross. It was neither smooth nor without the need to surmount boulders and speak out for truth, compassion, and justice. Lord help us look at our own road; consider carefully the decisions we make each time a boulder or cross-road appears; measure our steps against yours, always seeking your guidance and wisdom as we move forward; and never become so caught up in the journey that we forget to see the opportunities, blessings, and wonders there are to appreciate and embrace along the way.

This week, remember in prayer:

- **People dealing with COVID-19** & the problems the pandemic is creating for people & their communities especially where poverty, unrest, corruption, or other circumstances make dealing with the pandemic more difficult.
- **Nigeria** – kidnapping for ransom is a growing problem. Boko Haram attacks continue as do attacks by Fulani herders and bandits. The effects of COVID-19 are also being felt. There is still no further word on the Chibok school girls.
- **People who live with the ugliness of racism**, bigotry, or prejudice because we have not learned the lessons Jesus taught about how we should treat each other, or the lessons our past has tried to teach us about the dehumanizing nature of fear & the all-consuming & destructive power of hate.
- **Those who are victims of hate crimes.** The incidents of such crimes against Asian Americans have been increasing dramatically in recent months.
- **Victims of gun violence.** There has been a rash of incidences in which young children have had access to guns and unintentionally killed family members in recent days. 45 children under 11 have been killed & 86 injured already this year. There have been 257 unintentional shooting this year. 6,384 (which includes 3,630 suicides) people have been killed by gun violence this year. (Gun Violence Archive)



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