

A close-up photograph of a blackberry branch. The branch has several clusters of berries. Some berries are bright red, indicating they are ripe, while others are dark purple or black, indicating they are overripe. The berries are attached to a green stem with small, brown, fuzzy structures. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting foliage.

Somedays' Meditations

meditations for
twens and teenagers

September 2026

Sunday, September 6th, 2026

Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and all that is within me, bless God's holy Name.

Psalm 103:1

When I played soccer as a kid, before a game, our coach would say, "Give it your all!" People say this before a test, too: "Give it your all!" Do your best. Use all your strength or your intellect. Play soccer or take the test to your best ability, all so that you can win the game or ace the test.

What does it mean, though, if we say, "Give it your all *spiritually*." How can you pray using all your spiritual strength or fortitude? Or, to put it another way, what does it mean to, "Give your all to God"? Or, to follow Psalm 103, what does it mean to ask "all that is within you" to bless God's holy name?

We are made up of many parts. There are our brains, our hearts (both our *physical* hearts and our *emotional* hearts), and our bodies. We are children, friends, siblings, and just simple acquaintances. We are people who have done good things and have done bad things. We pray, and forget to pray. We delight in God, and we sin. And God's love shines down on us all.

Now take all of that, all that you are. Hold it before your mind's eye, or feel or experience all of it. Then imagine turning all of it to God. All the different parts of you can praise God. Every single part, whether you're proud of that part or you're a little shy. Whether you really like that part or whether you don't like that part. Each and every part of who we are can look to God and can bless God's holy name.

Activity

Try some quiet meditation so that you can "feel" all of the parts of you. Sit in a quiet room without many distractions, and try to feel all the sensations on your skin (from your shirt touching you to your hair against your ears). Then do the same for your "inside" as well: what your heart is feeling, whether you're worried or excited about things, what your thoughts are. Offer all this to God, even if you feel a bit shy about some of it. God will be there with you.

Sunday, September 13th, 2026

[And Jesus said,] “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people* to myself.”

John 12:32

Monday is the Feast of the Holy Cross. It's the day when we remember what Jesus did on the cross and who he did it for. But using the word “did” might seem strange. Jesus was nailed to the cross. He couldn't “do” anything. He was stuck there and had to experience whatever happened to him, which was ridicule and death. And yet we Christians say that Jesus was at his most powerful when he was on the cross.

We remember Jesus on the cross because, while there, Jesus gave up everything he had for the sake of all humanity, even all the universe. It's hard to imagine this - or, at least, it's hard for me to imagine this. When I give someone a gift (maybe on Christmas or on their birthday), I always hope that they'll like it. I worry that I'm giving them something that they don't need or that they might already have. Or maybe they just won't care about my gift. When I think this way, I'm only half-thinking about the other person, because I'm also half-thinking about myself.

When Jesus gave his gift on the cross, he gave it with no thought of himself. He gave for pure love and with pure hope that the gift would be accepted. Everything looked like his gift was going to fail (he was on the cross to be executed, after all), and yet Jesus had faith that his gift would be acceptable, both to God and to us and the universe. And it is Jesus's faith, his love for us, and his humility, that made all the difference.

Can we give with that same faith? Can we give with only love for the other person, not worry in our own hearts? Can we give and *just give*? When we do, our hearts connect with the other person, and we are able to meet that person at the place where God is inside of us. And we know this is true because God's life, Jesus's life, are both about *giving*. God is a gift that is always being given.

Prayer

Thank you God for the gift of your love. Help me experience the gift, but more so help me give the gift of love to those around me.

Sunday, September 20th, 2026

‘The word is near you,
on your lips and in your heart’

Romans 10:8

We have another feast day this week: tomorrow is the feast of St. Matthew, who wrote the book of Matthew in the Bible. Our reading today, however, is from the book of Romans, which St. Paul wrote. Why? Well, in this verse (which is actually just a small part of the whole verse), St. Paul writes something very important about us, God, and how we live our lives.

Have you ever tried to think of a word, and it was on the tip of your tongue, but you just couldn’t remember it? It really does feel like it’s on your tongue or somewhere inside your head, maybe bouncing around so much that you can’t catch it, or hiding somewhere you can’t find it. Sometimes it skitters off, and you have to just give up, but sometimes your mind latches onto it and you can finally spurt it out, and saying it feels so wonderful, like you’ve realized something so very important. Because, in fact, you have.

God is near you. In fact, God is so very near you that he’s like a word on the tip of your tongue or rumbling around in the back of your head. We walk around each day, all day, with the presence of God around us. God isn’t like the air, which we breathe without thinking about and can just forget about. God is like a little sound just inside the range of our hearing, or some sight we catch at the corner of our eyes.

God is present in all the good things in life, because God causes all good things to happen. God is present in the bad, too, because through the compassion of Jesus Christ God wishes to help us and heal us no matter what we’re going through. God is there to share our joy and to comfort our sorrow. God is always there to listen, to give you hope, and to lighten your joy and laughter. God is with us.

Activity

At least one time each day, try asking, “God, where are you today in my life?” Then listen and see what God says.

Sunday, September 27th, 2026

The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the firmament shows his handiwork.

Psalm 19:1

In movies, people often ask, “What does your heart tell you?” Let’s change it up and ask something a little different: “What do the trees tell you?”

Whoever wrote the 19th Psalm wanted you to ask this question about all of existence. “Heavens” and “firmament” are fancy ways of saying “the sky.” What does the night sky tell you? What does birdsong say? What do you think the wind in the trees is talking about? These may sound like strange questions, but the psalmist has an answer for you: everything in Creation speaks of the glory of God.

When we draw a picture or write a story, we put a lot of ourselves into it. That doesn’t mean that we draw ourselves or put ourselves into a story (though we certainly could), but that part of who we are, what we’re like, what we find important, and what we hope for (and what we’re scared of) often makes it into the things that we create. The psalmist here reminds us that, if that’s the case with us humans, the same thing can be said of God and Creation.

One thing that we can learn about God from looking at the world is that God loves beautiful things. The stars, trees, animals, the ocean, and the wind are all beautiful, and God made them for us to love. God also created the world to be looked at and for us to think about our lives when looking at the world (this is called contemplation). Also, if God created the world, then we need to use it well and not destroy it. Creation should be cared for, and if we take anything from the world, we should be ready to give back, too.

Questions

What does the world make you think of? Which part of the world do you like the best? What part of the world confuses you? What parts of the world are important and need to be protected and kept safe?

Somedays' Meditations

is written by Tim and Helene Hannon at Christ Church, Manlius NY. If you're interested in joining us on this project, feel free to get in touch with us at rector@christchurchmanlius.org!