

READING

LENT

GUIDE

Join Hallow's Lent Pray40 challenge as we draw closer to Jesus, who is "the way, the truth, and the life." We'll embark on a spiritual journey with the incredible writings of St. Josemaría Escrivá, author of *The Way*. We'll also meditate on the lives of those who follow Christ's Way, specifically the life of Servant of God Takashi Nagai. We'll come to know this remarkable Japanese physician who survived the atomic bombing in 1945, along with his difficulties, heartbreak, and conversion, through the biography *A Song for Nagasaki* written by Paul Glynn, S.M.



The Way is a collection of profound spiritual advice from St. Josemaría Escrivá compiled in 999 categorized "points", or considerations. Select quotes from *The Way* are listed below in their associated week.

If you'd like to purchase your own copy of *The Way* to follow along with during Pray40, click [here](#)

A Song for Nagasaki is a biography of the Servant of God, Takashi Nagai. This book is more of a straightforward narrative, with the chapters listed for each week helping you follow along with the story's narrative told in Pray40.

Hallow partnered with Ignatius Press to create a special edition of *A Song for Nagasaki* for the Pray40 challenge, which you can purchase [here](#) for 20% off your order.

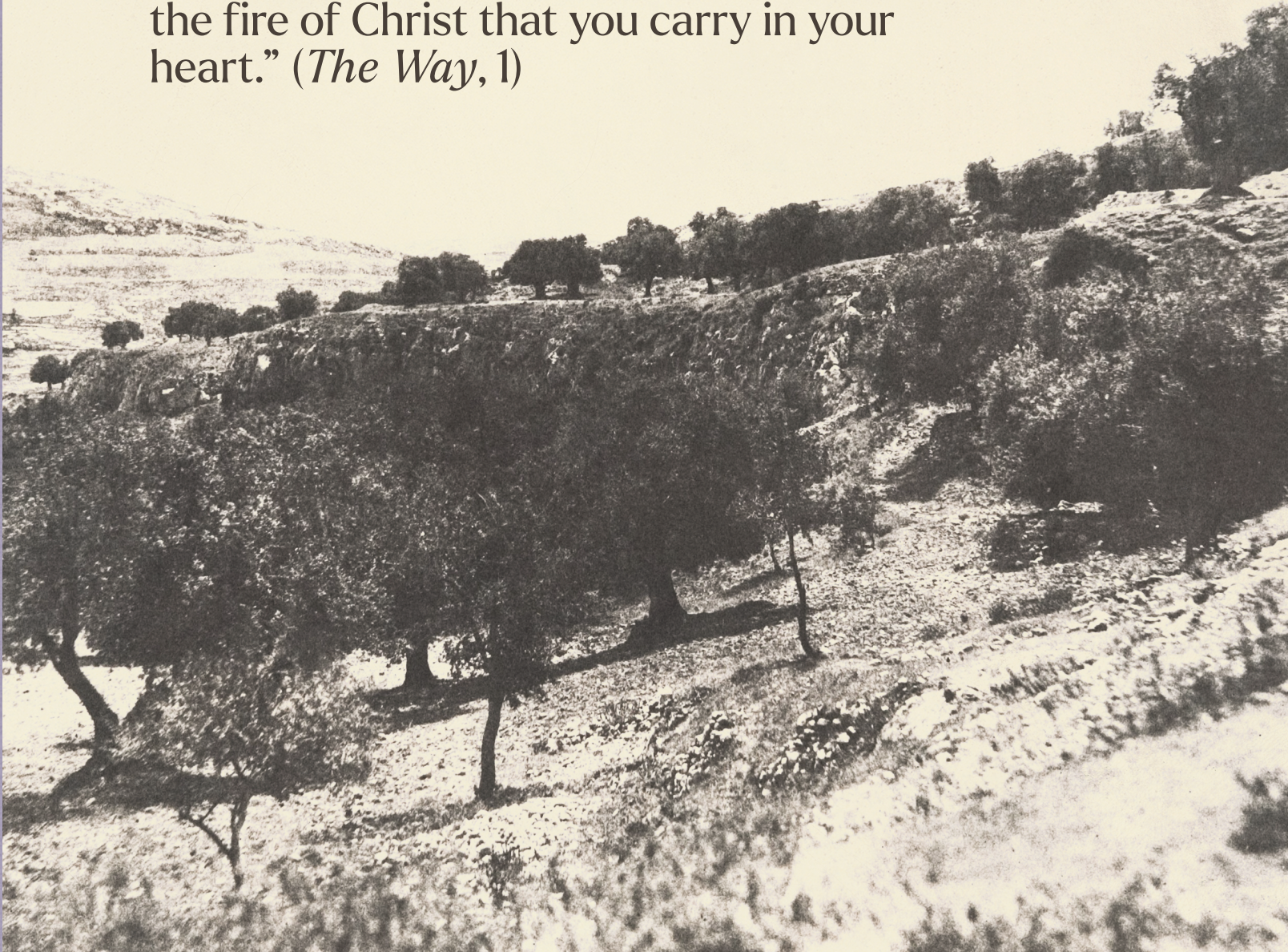


Use this reading plan as a resource to go deeper into St. Josemaría Escrivá's *The Way* and the remarkable story of Takashi Nagai in *A Song for Nagasaki*.

WEEK 1: THE WAY

This week, learn more about Takashi Nagai's childhood and early life by reading chapters 1-5 in *A Song for Nagasaki*.

“Don't let your life be sterile. Be useful. Blaze a trail. Shine forth with the light of your faith and of your love.... And light up all the ways of the earth with the fire of Christ that you carry in your heart.” (*The Way*, 1)



WEEK 2: THE WAY OF PRAYER

Catch up to the beginning of our story in Pray40 as we begin with the conversion of Takashi Nagai. Read chapters 5-9 in *A Song for Nagasaki*.

“Go to prayer: to become a blaze,
a living flame giving heat and light.”
(*The Way*, 92)

“Persevere in prayer. Persevere, even when
your efforts seem sterile. Prayer is always
fruitful.” (*The Way*, 101)

“Have you seen the gratitude of little
children? Imitate them, saying to Jesus,
when things are favorable and when
they are adverse: 'How good you are!
How good!...' These words, if you mean
them, are the way of childhood, and will
bring you peace.” (*The Way*, 894)



“Your interior life has to be just that: to begin... and to begin again.” (*The Way*, 292)

“You don't know how to pray? Put yourself in the presence of God, and as soon as you have said, ‘Lord, I don't know how to pray!’ you can be sure you've already begun.” (*The Way*, 90)

“[Talk with God] ... About Him, and yourself: joys, sorrows, successes and failures, great ambitions, daily worries—even your weaknesses! And acts of thanksgiving and petitions—and Love and reparation. In short: to get to know him and to get to know yourself— 'to get acquainted!'” (*The Way*, 91)

“Abandonment to the will of God is the secret of happiness on earth.” (*The Way*, 766)

“Jesus, whatever you 'want', I love!”
(*The Way*, 773)

“Is that what you want, Lord?... Then it's what I want also!” (*The Way*, 762)



WEEK 3: THE WAY OF LOVE

This week Takashi Nagai embarks on his new life in Christ. Read chapters 10-14 in *A Song for Nagasaki*.

“My God, I love you, but... oh, teach me to love!” (*The Way*, 423)

“Humbly ask God to increase your faith. Then, with new lights, you’ll see clearly the difference between the world’s paths and your way as an apostle.” (*The Way*, 580)

“Conversion is a matter of a moment. Sanctification is the work of a lifetime.” (*The Way*, 285)



“Don't disregard the little things, which are really never futile or trivial. ... [With] God's grace you will increase in strength and... character.... [You'll] first become master of yourself, and then a guide and a leader: to compel, to urge, to draw others with your example and with your word and with your knowledge and with your power.”
(The Way, 19)



WEEK 4: THE WAY OF SUFFERING

Walk with Takashi Nagai as he faces the greatest difficulties of his life. Read chapters 15-22 in *A Song for Nagasaki*.

"I want you to be happy on earth. But you won't be if you don't get rid of that fear of suffering. For as long as we are 'wayfarers,' it is precisely in suffering that our happiness lies." (*The Way*, 217)

"For others, death is a stumbling block, a source of terror. For us, death... is an encouragement and a stimulus. For them it is the end; for us the beginning."
(*The Way*, 738)



WEEK 5: THE WAY OF SURRENDER

Experience the miracles and renewed hope of Takashi Nagai as he surrenders all to the Lord. Read chapters 22-25 in *A Song for Nagasaki*.

“We are stones—blocks of stone—that can move, can feel, that have completely free wills. God himself is the stonecutter who chips off the edges, shaping and modifying us as he desires, with blows of the hammer and chisel. Let us not try to draw aside, let us not try to evade his will, for in any case we won’t be able to avoid the blows. We will suffer all the more, and uselessly. Instead of polished stone suitable for building, we will be a shapeless heap of gravel that people will trample on contemptuously.” (*The Way*, 756)



“After losing those human consolations you have been left with a feeling of loneliness, as if you were hanging by a thin thread over the emptiness of a black abyss. And your cries, your shouts for help, seem to go unheard by anybody. The truth is you deserve to be so forlorn... Love the cross... and our Lord will hear your prayer. And in time, calm will be restored to your senses. And your heart will heal, and you will have peace.” (*The Way*, 726)



WEEK 6: THE WAY OF RESURRECTION

This week, we conclude our remarkable story of the Servant of God, Takashi Nagai. Finish by reading chapters 26-31 in *A Song for Nagasaki*.

“In the moments of struggle and tribulation, when perhaps... your way [is filled] with obstacles, lift up your... heart: listen to Jesus as he speaks... And you’ll feel the joy of contemplating the victory to come.” (*The Way*, 695)

“Haven’t you heard the mournful tone with which the worldly complain that ‘each day that passes is a step nearer death’? It is. And I tell you: rejoice...for each day that passes brings you closer to Life.” (*The Way*, 737)

