

ASCENDING LIFE-CANADA

Spiritual Resource Journal/ Feb 2018

AROUND THE LENTEN CIRCLE

Lent begins this year earlier than most. Christmas season has just ended and the celebration of the Magi meeting the baby Jesus, has barely passed, and, now:..

In the Lenten readings we will hear, Jesus is a full grown man, teaching, performing miracles, being tested by humans as well as Satan.

First Sunday of Lent

“He was among the wild beasts and angels ministered him” Mark1:13

May this Lenten journey allow us to come to know Jesus better and follow him more closely!

OPENING PRAYER

Leader: We gather to reflect on this season of Lent, quieting ourselves, so that we may better hear God’s message for us.

All: Lord, be with us on this journey.

Leader: We gather to reflect on our own personal deserts and how God walked with us through them.

All: Lord, help us to see how you have been with us even if we did not recognize it at the time.

Leader: We pray that we may leave here inspired to be more aware of and sensitive to those who are experiencing times of darkness and temptation now.

All: Help us to be more like Jesus, so that we may withstand the temptation which pulls us away from life, love and light. Amen

Questions for Reflection and Contemplation

1: What is your general experience of Lent? Is it something you look forward to? Dread? Or has it not had any significant impact on you in the past?

2: Do you have any particular hopes for how you want to observe Lent this year? What commitments are you considering, especially in the realm of Praying, Fasting, or Almsgiving?

3: What would you like to get from this Journal, from this Gathering?

LISTENNG—Psalm 25:4-6;9-10

“Make me to know your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me...

“Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been from old....

REFLECTION

“He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his ways. All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.”

There are hundreds of journeys in the Bible: Moses out of Egypt; Mary to visit Elizabeth; Jesus’ journey to Nazareth; to the Sea of Galilee; then on to Jerusalem, where he was killed.

Many of the Biblical journeys involved unforeseen twists and turns, detours and/or interruptions.

We have all undertaken many journeys in our lives too, sometimes physical moves to other locations; sometimes more symbolic-child to kindergarten; teen stepping out on his own; perhaps a journey on a romantic love relationship; change of careers; entering the golden age of our lives

In all these journeys, we would do well to pray to know which path the Lord is inviting us to follow, those paths calling us to a greater steadfastness of love and faithfulness.

Those paths we want to take that would lead us to truth and love.

CONTEMPLATION AND CONVERSATION

- 1: Has there been a time when you chose a path that moved you away from steadfastness love and faithfulness? What learnings did you glean from that experience?
2. Was there a time when you made a decision that led you to a greater love, truth and more abundant life? What told you that it was the right path for you to take?
- 3: Is there an area in your life in which you need God to show you the right path?

GOSPEL (Mark 1:12-15)

“At once, the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals and the angels attended him.”

“Now John was put in prison. Jesus, went to Galilee, proclaiming the goodness of God, “The time has come,” he said,” The Kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe in the good news!”

REFLECTION

Mark’s Gospel, the shortest one of the Gospels, is the story of Jesus’ temptation, telling us the interesting detail that, after Jesus went through the ordeal of his temptations, the angels cared for him. When he returns he begins his public ministry, bringing the good news to those who are suffering and encouraging people to turn away from destructive behavior.

The season of Lent provides a great opportunity to practice turning away from unhealthy or sinful habits and to begin living more and more into Jesus’ “Good News.”

We have 40 days to action in three areas; praying, fasting and almsgiving. All of these have potential to lead us back to Jesus and his teaching.

We are encouraged to strengthen our prayer life. Perhaps add a little more time to our prayer life. Lent can be the push we need to get started. It can be as simple as following Lenten prayer booklet or on-line daily retreat prayers.

Commonly we fast from sweets, coffee, alcohol for 40 days, then go back to our regular habits after Easter.

Perhaps we might consider fasting from something that is unloving, unproductive or just not good for us. That might mean fasting from gossip, social media or from buying things we do not need.

Finally, with almsgiving, we are called to share our resources with the poor. Why not save the money you would have spent going out once a week and donate it to a food program instead. Use the money you would use for personal luxury and give it to a homeless person- without judgement how he or she might use it.

QUESTIONS FOR CONTEMPLATION AND CONVERSATION

1. What are you considering doing to observe Lent this year in the areas of prayer, fasting and almsgiving?
2. What temptation is vexing you? What helps in your efforts to reset your efforts?
3. How might you call upon the support of others (Angels around you) in order to reset the temptation

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

R; Lord, hear our Prayer

As we commence our Lenten Circle, that we may through prayer, fasting and almsgiving follow your path to greater steadfastness love and faithfulness, leading us to love and truth. R

That through our almsgiving, the weaker members of our society, the homeless, the hungry, the lonely, may find comfort and peace. R

CLOSING PRAYER

Teach us Lord, to worship you with undivided hearts and to cherish all people with truth and faithful love. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your son, who lives and reigns with you in unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever. Amen

Leader: Lord God, teach us your path

All: Help us to choose the way that leads to life and to reset any temptation that leads us farther away from love, hope and Justice.

Leader: We ask this in Jesus' name.

All: Amen

Conclude with the sign of Peace.