
KEEPING A HOLY LENT

PRACTICES: READING AND MEDITATING ON GOD'S HOLY WORD



54

OPENING PRAYER – COLLECT FOR FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

55

WARM-UP CONVERSATION

- How are your disciplines/devotions going?
 - Any struggles?
 - Any insights gained?

56

RECAP

- Lent is not a standalone goal (a.k.a. self-help season)
- It is a preparation for Easter
 - Season of Penance and Discipline
 - Preparation for the Renewal of our own Baptismal Covenant
- Practices help us in our preparation
 - Self-examination and Repentance lead us grace and forgiveness that we may in turn bear the fruits of holiness
 - Prayer and worship connect us with God that we may respond to him in adoration, praise, thanksgiving, penitence, oblation, intercession, and petition.

57

PRACTICES: FASTING AND SELF-DENIAL

What is the purpose of a Fast?

- Humility (Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21)
- Penitence (Jonah 3:8)
- Stir our hearts towards rightly ordered love of God and of neighbor rather than love of food, drink, etc. (Isaiah 58:1-12)
- Make room for prayer, almsgiving, reading of Scripture, service
- Prepare for the feast
 - Easter
 - Holy Days
 - Communion

58

PRACTICES: READING AND MEDITATING ON GOD'S HOLY WORD

- Helpful Hints
 - Version
 - Consider your reading plan (i.e., You don't have to start at the beginning)
 - Pick a time and place
- Reading Plans
 - Daily Office (BCP p. 933-1001)
 - Two Year Cycle reading through OT once and NT twice
 - Daily readings from Old Testament, Psalms, Gospels, and Epistles
 - Bible in a Year
 - Book at a time
 - Choose a Devotion

59

PRACTICES: READING AND MEDITATING ON GOD'S HOLY WORD

Praying/Meditating on God's Holy Word: A general process

- Quiet yourself before beginning
- Pray before you begin
- Meditate (Options to follow)
- If you get distracted or your mind wanders, gently return to the text or step at hand
- Reflect with God briefly, speaking heart-to-heart
- Close with prayer
- Look forward to the next time

60

PRACTICES: READING AND MEDITATING ON GOD'S HOLY WORD

Meditation

- Read the text through
- Reflect on the truths revealed
- Ponder the meaning
- Focus on two or three points that stand out to you
- Embrace what God is saying to you
- Notice what is going on inside you.

Ignatian Contemplation

- Read the text through
- Place yourself inside the story
- Participate in the scene
- Observe what is going on around you
- Dialogue with other characters
- Notice what is going on inside you

61

PRACTICES: READING AND MEDITATING ON GOD'S HOLY WORD

Lectio Divina

- Reading (lectio)
- Meditation (meditation)
- Prayer (oratio)
- Contemplation
- Action

Other Options

- Read the chapter, section, or verse before/after (if not reading sequentially)
- Read one or more different translations then compare/contrast
- Pause on each word/phrase to emphasize it (shorter passages)
- Rewrite the passage in your own words
- Use a study Bible or commentary to help dig into details and background
- Memorize
- Journal

62

WRAP-UP CONVERSATION

- How has Lent gone as a whole?
- Have you found this series helpful?

63

CLOSING PRAYER – COLLECT FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen