



### **Becoming Like Jesus**

Lent is the season of preparation for Easter, beginning with Ash Wednesday, February 26, and concluding with the beginning of Holy Week. Holy Week remembers Jesus' Passion (suffering) beginning with Palm Sunday and ending with the feast of Christ's Resurrection on April 12.

Advent and Christmas celebrate the Incarnation, "the Word became flesh" (John 1:14). God revealed himself to us through Jesus: "No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known" (John 1:18).

To become a Christian means to have our sins forgiven, and to be secure in our relationship with God. But it is so much more. Christians can know God and find our God-given purpose in Christ: "I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death" (Philippians 3:10).

How can we know Christ and become like him? A devotional booklet, "A Wondrous Love", is available on the literature rack. The book [In the Name of Jesus](#) by Henri Nouwen will help you reflect more deeply on this topic. Here are some additional recommendations:

### **Praying Scripture (Lectio Divina)**

What was it like for Jesus to experience life as a human being? A guide to "Praying Scripture", i.e., the prayer practice of lectio divina, is available on the literature rack. Praying the following passages will help you understand Jesus' human experience:

Having a physical body:

- The first temptation (Matthew 4:1-4)
- Being baptized (Matthew 3:13-17)
- At Jacob's well (John 4:1-10)

Desiring popularity and recognition:

- The second temptation (Matthew 4:5-7)
- Jesus' teaching on giving and prayer (Matthew 6:2-7)
- Healing a leper (Mark 1:40-45)

Seeking power and influence:

- The third temptation (Matthew 4:8-10)
- Feeding the 5000 (John 6:5-15)
- The Triumphal Entry (Mark 11:1-11)

### **Imaginative prayer**

Imaginative contemplation is another way to contemplate the earthly life of Jesus. Pre-recorded guides are available at <https://pray-as-you-go.org/article/imaginative-contemplation-exercises>. Each recording lasts about 20 minutes but you are welcome to stop the recording at any time to give a scene or question additional attention.

### **Fasting**

The season of Lent is patterned after Jesus' 40 day fast (Matt. 4:2) and began as a time of preparation for baptism candidates looking toward an Easter baptism. During Lent, fasting can be an especially meaningful spiritual practice as we seek to become like Christ. There are many kinds of fasting. You could skip lunch one or more days a week. A weekly 24-hour fast could mean skipping lunch and dinner. You may limit what you eat during Lent (e.g., abstaining from coffee or meat). Or you may fast from an activity such as reading your newsfeed in the morning, or watching Netflix, or by turning off all electronic devices for an hour or more a day. Use the time to attend to God through the Lenten devotional guide or other prayer practices. The point of fasting is not to focus on our sacrifice but to focus our attention on God's voice and to reveal the voices within us that compete with God's voice. It isn't the fasting that changes us, but God's presence in our lives. Notice your reaction to the fast and attend to what God reveals to you. May your Lenten fast help you to hear God and experience his transforming presence.

### **Lent and Holy Week events**

March 7 – Lenten Prayer Retreat, 9:30-11:30, in Fireside Room

March 22 – Lenten Prayer Retreat during worship service

April 9 – Maundy Thursday informal liturgy in small groups

April 10 – Stations of the Cross available all day (1555 Oak Ave.)

April 10 – Good Friday service, 7-8pm (1371 Truman Ave.)