

# Journey in the Desert



Week Five  
Surrender—Being Able  
To Let Go

As you begin this season of Lent, reflect on this passage.

When the hour came, he took his place at table with the apostles. He said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, for, I tell you, I shall not eat it again until there is fulfillment in the kingdom of God." Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and said, "Take this and share it among yourselves; for I tell you (that) from this time on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me." And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you.

Luke 22: 14-20

Our Lord offers us his whole life. Yet, so often we focus on ourselves and what we can give God or do for God. Have you ever considered what God wants to give you? God wants to bless us with his grace. During this season of Lent, ask yourself this question - what does God want to give me this Lenten season?

### **Fourth Week of Lent**

**Daily prayer:** Each morning as you begin your day, light a candle and say the following prayer:

Life giving Father, I offer you my whole life this day. Help me to be generous so that all I do is for your glory. Every time I want to hold on to my life, give me the courage to follow your Son, Jesus Christ who offered his whole life for our salvation. Direct my life always in accord with your will. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Are there any opportunities where I can live out my life today which shows that I have given my whole life to God? What is going to make that difficult? What will be the rewards?** (Use the space below to write down brief notes each day.)

**Daily meditation:** Following is the Gospel for the fifth Sunday of Lent. Read this scripture passage each morning, then reflect on the daily questions that follow.

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. But early in the morning he arrived again in the temple area, and all the people started coming to him, and he sat down and taught them. Then the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery and made her stand in the middle. They said to him, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?” They said this to test him, so that they could have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and began to write on the ground with his finger. But when they continued asking him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” Again he bent down and wrote on the ground. And in response, they went away one by one, beginning with the elders. So he was left alone with the woman before him. Then Jesus straightened up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” She replied, “No one, sir.” Then Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin any more.” (John 8:1-11)

Sunday—This whole scripture passage speaks to us about God’s abundant mercy. It is hard for us to comprehend this kind of mercy. How do you picture God when you come to him seeking forgiveness? Do you have the same image when you come to Him seeking guidance or to help you with other needs?

Monday—Do you find satisfaction in finding faults in others and pointing them out? Have you done this recently? What have you gained by doing this? What do you feel like when someone embarrasses you?

Tuesday—The scribes and the Pharisees confronted and embarrassed the woman caught in adultery. Can you think of any other way to react to someone who has done something wrong? What would you want someone to do to you if you were the one who was at fault?

Wednesday—A tradition in the Church says that Jesus was writing on the ground the sins of the accusers. If you were one of the accusers, what would Jesus be writing for you?

Thursday—Jesus' says to the woman "do not sin any more." Was Jesus really serious? If he expects that for each of us, what is your reaction?

Friday—Obviously the woman felt great relief after being freed from sin. After receiving our God's forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, how do you react? Do you look to the future in what God offers you or do you stay in the past with your sins?

Saturday—What have you learned this week about forgiveness after reflecting on this passage? Have your attitudes or actions changed in any way? If so, how?

## Weekly Exercise

One of the challenges of our life is to surrender our whole life to God. We know how to surrender but we often don't surrender to God but rather to things of this world. Reflect on these scripture passages and the questions.

- ◇ Come to terms with God to be at peace. In this shall good come to you. (Job 22:21)
- ◇ Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." (Luke 1:38)
- ◇ But thanks be to God that, although you were once slaves of sin, you have become obedient from the heart to the pattern of teaching to which you were entrusted. Freed from sin, you have become slaves of righteousness. (Romans 6:17)
- ◇ I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect. (Romans 12:1-2)
- ◇ So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Where are you at right now in terms of surrendering your life to God?

Can you list those things in your life or areas in your life that you are holding on to? Can you answer why?

Do you think surrendering your life to God would weaken you?

How do you think it could strengthen you?

If you are able to surrender everything to God, how would your life be different? What do you look forward to in living your life in this manner?

Who do you know in your life that has surrendered their life to God? What makes their life attractive? What difficulties do you see?

## Journey Check Point

We are more than halfway through Lent now. Let's do a quick check up on the three main components of our Lenten journey. What are you doing differently now than you did a week ago? Make some brief notes in each of the areas below. Look back at your workbook from week one if you need more suggestions.

Prayer—

Fasting—

Almsgiving—

**If you chose to adopt a virtue**, reflect more on that virtue this week. Have you been practicing this virtue more than you were three weeks ago? If yes, write yourself a little note of congratulations. Specify times and places of your virtuous behavior as best you can, and also note how you felt at these times. Is it getting easier?

If no, you are not getting better at practicing this virtuous behavior, note three reasons you can think of why this may be so. What is stopping you from making this improvement in your life?

**If you are working at losing a vice,** make note of the times you were able to overcome this vice this past week.

Make a list of all the people your behavior impacts when you engage in this vice. How do they feel about you when you practice this vice? How do you feel about yourself?

**Take a few minutes before attending Mass this weekend** to read over the words to this song which we will be singing as our closing song.

### ***We Are Called***

Come! Live in the light! Shine with the joy and the love of the Lord! We are called to be light for the kingdom, to live in the freedom of the city of God!

Refrain: We are called to act with justice, we are called to love tenderly, we are called to serve one another; to walk humbly with God!

Come! Open your heart! Show your mercy to all those in fear! We are called to be hope for the hopeless so all hatred and blindness will be no more! (refrain)

Sing! Sing a new song! Sing of that great day when all will be one! God will reign, and we'll walk with each other as sisters and brothers united in love! (refrain)

What does it mean to live in the light?

What does it mean to shine with joy?

Do you do this? Note five ways you shine with joy each day this week. (Use additional paper.)

**And finally...**

**Look at your workbook from week one again,** what notes did you make about what a “good Lent” looks like? What things have you done this past week that have moved you towards the experience of a good Lent? Look back over your notes in this area from the past few weeks. Are you actually taking action to be ready for Easter?

Are you enjoying this Lenten series? Do you have any suggestions or critiques? What do you like about it, what can we improve on? Send your thoughts to [feedback@epiphanymn.org](mailto:feedback@epiphanymn.org). Thanks!