

A Lenten Journey

“Lent” is one of those words that we struggle with. *Isn't it a Catholic thing?* we wonder. And we feel somehow empowered to stand brave and tall for our Protestant heritage. Well, it's probably time to get on board, because Lent has been celebrated in Protestant circles for centuries now, so that logic no longer holds meaning.

It's a 40-day journey, and it has ties to Jesus' time alone in the desert, and his journey toward Jerusalem and the crucifixion cross. He knew where he was headed. He knew its humiliation. He knew that he would never live to be an old man. He could have spent his time getting his final affairs in order. He could have avoided the cross. He had a choice. Yet within those last 40 days, he continued to serve, to heal, to laugh, to teach, to live his life fully.

Some have heard that they should *give something up for Lent*. Some have heard that they may choose to *add something new for Lent*. Well yes, and isn't that sort of silly? Oh, it's a good practice. It might lead to a good new habit. Jesus was ministering, and praying so hard that he sometimes sweated blood, and we're trying to decide if we should eliminate chocolate from our diets. *Really?*

Some don't want to engage in a Lenten study, because it's the same old lesson, year after year. We know it ends on Easter morning. Why don't we just go there? It's a happy time, and we'd much rather think of positive things. Well, many do. Did we learn something in a study group last year during Lent? And who's fault might that be?

We might take one word – a Lenten word – and tape it to our mirror, or put it in our pocket, where we could see it each day during Lent. We might focus on that one word and see how it shows up in our life. How one single word takes on meaning during Lent. How just one word changes our opinion about the 40 days. How one single word, considered once a day, might make us more appreciative of what the Messiah did. Or we might not.

We could try to understand and appreciate what Jesus went through. How he centered his mind, not on ordering his worldly needs, but on you. On you. How he surrendered his life, for you. We could take some of our life, and spend it thinking about his. We could.

The choice is yours. It's always been yours. God does not react to us because of what we do or don't do. God initiates. What God intended to do, God has already done. And now God waits. For you.

I hope you make the right choice this year.

May your blessings abound,

Candice

And he was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan.

He was with wild animals and angels attended him.

– Mark 1:13