



During and After Lent

We are at the beginning of Lent, a time of abstinence and repentance. Its origins can be traced back to the third century to commemorate the forty days that Jesus spent in the desert. In the early Christian communities, a single meal would be eaten after sundown. This practice is still followed by Muslims during Ramadan.

Among Christians, Lenten practices have been adapted throughout the centuries and in many cases, often reduced to simple formalities. How do we observe Lent today? What part does tradition and practice play? How can we celebrate these forty days that were so crucial to Christ's mission?

FIND your *personal desert* ... Christian life finds its meaning in meditation, solitude, and introspection that we can only find in a *desert setting*. Thus we must find a place where we can profoundly experience this reality.

IDENTIFY a place where you can leave behind the temptations of the world that are poised to trap you. Allow yourself to be inspired by God's Word. After his retreat in the desert, Jesus was no longer bound by the status quo and set standards. He distanced himself from the powerful people of his era. He simply wanted to fulfill his mission to serve the poor, the sick, those without a voice, and those who needed guidance to attain eternal life.

FREE YOURSELF from your chains and for a time, set conformity aside and distance yourself from the abundant pleasures that the world offers us. Unless we deliberately separate ourselves from worldly enticements, can we really listen to God's Word?

In our quest for solitude, we also ask for the gift of meditation. Solitude, as Jesus experienced, will produce peace, joy, serenity and a return to evangelical values – which can be enjoyed in silence. Life always has its moments of crisis, but silence and solitude encourage us to examine our inner selves and liberate our authentic spirits. Despite our prayerful encounters and support from our families and friends, an interior life is not developed externally – it is a personal and private quest.

There are forty days of self-discovery. These moments in our *personal deserts* can support our lives spent in overpopulated cities! We cherish this privileged connection to the Covenant that we share with Our Savior.

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Translated by Honore Kerwin Borrelli

God Keeps His Promise : Be Confident !