

## Lent: A Time of Renewal



**D**uring Lent, through the practices of fasting, almsgiving and prayer, we are invited to strip away our daily distractions and focus more sincerely on our Gospel call to enter into a deeper union with God. Saint Francis loved Lent and he embraced it with a level of intensity that few would dare

attempt. But it's not by imitating his legendary fasting and countless hours of uninterrupted prayer that would bear the most fruit for us anyway. What Francis reminds us of is that the closeness we feel toward God and the love we experience

from God, depends on the amount of attention we put into our relationship with God. For the Psalmist says *the Lord is near to all who call upon him; the Lord watches over all who love him.* ✚



### Early Writings

From *The Little Flowers of Saint Francis*

Once Saint Francis was alongside the Lake of Perugia on the day of Carnival, at the house of a man devoted to him, where he was lodged for the night. He was inspired by God to go make that Lent on an island in the lake. So Saint Francis asked this devout man that, for love of Christ, he carry him with his little boat to an island of the lake where no one lived, and that he do this on the night of the Day of the Ashes.... And Saint Francis took nothing with him except two small loaves of bread.... Since there was no dwelling in which he could take shelter, he went into some very thick brush that was formed like a den or a little hut by many bushes and saplings. And in this place he put himself in prayer and contemplation of heavenly things. And there he stayed the whole of Lent without eating or drinking, except for half of those little loaves.

Regis Armstrong, Wayne Hellmann  
& William Short, eds.

*Francis of Assisi: Early Documents, The Prophet*, Vol. III  
(New York: New City Press, 2001), 578-579.

### Scripture

#### Mark 1:12-13

At once the Spirit drove Jesus out into the desert and he remained there for forty days, tempted by Satan. He was among wild beasts, and the angels ministered to him.

Heavenly Father, in the midst of all the noise and clutter that seems to always be a part of life, quiet my mind so that I may be wholly present to you. Help me maintain a habit of prayer this Lent that will not only sustain me these 40 days, but will renew my relationship with you.

### Prayer

### Reflection Questions

- What distracts me from a deeper relationship with God?
- How can I make this Lent a time of renewal?