



COMPANIONS OF BARNABAS
a missional community in the Wesleyan tradition

SIX LENTEN PRACTICES

'Lent' is the Old English word for Spring, the season that ends Winter and in which new life begins again. Drawing on the ancient Celtic tradition of these islands, these six Lenten practices that will help us to prepare for the feast (of Easter) by focussing on nature, learning and the ordinary. In this, we will be accompanied by a number of Saints whose lives embodied these practices.

The six practices are:

1. *Giving*
2. *Planting*
3. *Noticing*
4. *Connecting*
5. *Learning*
6. *Sending*

The popular misconception of Lent is that it is about giving up pleasure in order to become more holy. Our Celtic forebears knew that it was about a much deeper search for true pleasure and satisfaction which could only be found by removing distractions and becoming attentive to the God who dwells in the ordinary and the simple. It is a rediscovery of (or reorientation to) the things that truly matter: beauty, truth, hope and love.

There will be a blog post and podcast each week to guide us and help us to focus. The pattern will be the same each week:

- *Entry into stillness*
- *Introduction to our saintly companion*
- *Listening to Scripture*
- *Waiting for the Word*
- *Practicing Lent*
- *Blessing*

WEEK THREE: NOTICING

Entry into stillness

○ Lord, let my soul rise up to meet you:
as the day rises to meet the sun.

**Glory to God, Source of All,
Word of Truth, Breath of Life,
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

Canticle

God to enfold me,
God to surround me,
God in my speaking,
God in my thinking.

God in my sleeping,
God in my waking,
God in my watching,
God in my hoping.

God in my life,
God in my lips,
God in my soul,
God in my heart.

God in my sufficing,
God in my slumber,
God in mine ever-living soul,
God in mine eternity.
Carmina Gadelica

Introduction to our saintly companion

We are focussing on NOTICING this week. In a world in increasing distraction and limited attention-spans, it is becoming more and more difficult to sustain our focus on the things that matter.

Lent is about slowing down in order to see what is really going on. It is a chance to notice those things - and people - that we tend to ignore or overlook. In noticing the forgotten, we see the face of Christ.

Mother Julian of Norwich (1342-1416?)

Julian lived the whole of her life in the city of Norwich in the later half of the 14th century. She became an anchoress where she was permanently sealed in a cell adjoining the church and remained there to pray, study and give counsel to those who sought her out. She recorded her visions in *Revelations of Divine Love*, the first book written in English by a woman.

“And in this he showed me a little thing, the quantity of a hazelnut, lying in the palm of my hand, as it seemed. And it was as round as any ball. I looked upon it with the eye of my understanding, and thought, ‘What may this be?’ And it was answered generally thus, ‘It is all that is made.’ I marvelled how it might last, for I thought it might suddenly have fallen to nothing for littleness. And I was answered in my understanding: It lasts and ever shall, for God loves it. And so have all things their beginning by the love of God.



In this little thing I saw three properties. The first is that God made it. The second that God loves it. And the third, that God keeps it.”

*Julian of Norwich,
Revelations of Divine
Love*

Listening to Scripture Luke 10:38-42

Now as they went on their way, Jesus and his disciples entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.' But the Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one

thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.'

Waiting for the Word

We spend some time reflecting and listening for the Word.

Practicing Lent

This week why not:

- go for a walk in a familiar place with the intention of noticing new things
- try **centring prayer** at least once (see link below)
- think of someone in your life who goes unnoticed and send them a greeting?

Blessing

Circle us, Lord

Keep strife without, keep peace within;

keep fear without, keep hope within;

keep pride without, keep trust within;

keep evil out, keep good within.

May we walk in the hope of your presence;

fill us with your light and love; be with us all through this day Source, Word and Spirit.

Further Reading

Julian of Norwich - *Revelations of Divine Love*

Neil Postman - *Amusing ourselves to death*

<https://www.contemplative.org/contemplative-practice/centering-prayer/>