



LENTEN
PROGRAM
Year A

*our hearts
on mission*

Locke • O'Beirne • Moore • Waddell

Copyright in this work remains the property
of the contributing authors.
Copyright © Clare Locke, Ann-Maree O’Beirne,
Gerard Moore, Charles Waddell 2025
All rights reserved. Except as provided by the
Australian copyright law, no part of this book
may be reproduced in any way without permission
in writing from the publisher.

Cover & Text Design by Guy Holt
Edited by Juliette Hughes

Front and back cover image by iStock
Martin Wahlborg 495600600
Inside images © iStock Photos: pp 2–3 lynnebeclu
1490807347, pp 4–5 wellyboots 153813702, p 7
FiledIMAGE 506512218, p 9 zodebala 106396735,
p 10 sara_winter 183263174,
p 13 FiledIMAGE 1225581912, p 15 v_zaitsev
1403344178, p 16 Oknopo 522751351,
p 18 Andrew Buesnel 2154715198, p 19 EyeEm
Mobile GmbH 2171906168, p 22 Ridofranz
Ridofranz 1496615471, p 23 RinoCdZ 17244505,
p 26 pmmart 1312302656, p 27 Tales by Pictures
1311101436, p 33 shuang paul wang 1469877206
© Wikimedia Commons: p 21 *Saint Paul* by
Giovanni Francesco Barbieri, p 24 *The supper*
at Emmaus by Caravaggio
© Alamy: p 12 *The Water of Life* sculpture,
The Cloister Garth, Chester Cathedral, Cheshire,
England, UK

Printed by Tingleman Printers

The Jerusalem Bible translation of Scripture is used in
the Lectionary for Mass, revised edition approved for use
in the dioceses of Australia and New Zealand. Vols I, II
and III (London: Collins Liturgical, 1981)
Acknowledgement: The Scripture Readings are taken
from the Jerusalem Bible © 1966, 1967, 1968 Darton,
Longman & Todd Ltd and Doubleday and Co. Inc.

ISBN 9781923095175

Cataloguing in Publication information for this title
is available from the National Library of Australia.
www.nla.gov.au

For details of the Nihil Obstat and Imprimatur please
check the Garratt Publishing website,
www.garrattpublishing.com.au.

The authors and publisher gratefully acknowledge
the permission granted to reproduce the copyright
material in this book. Every effort has been made to
trace copyright holders and to obtain their permission
for the use of copyright material.

The publisher apologises for any errors or omissions
in the above list and would be grateful if notified of
any corrections that should be incorporated in future
reprints or editions of this book.

CONTENTS

ABOUT THE AUTHORS.....1

INTRODUCTION
by Gerard Moore2

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT
by Clare Locke.....4

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT
by Clare Locke.....7

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT
by Ann-Maree O’Beirne 10

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT
by Ann-Maree O’Beirne13

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT
by Gerard Moore16

SIXTH SUNDAY OF LENT
by Gerard Moore19

TRIDUUM
by Charles Waddell22

– HOLY THURSDAY24
– GOOD FRIDAY25
– EASTER SUNDAY26

Readings for Lent Year A.....28

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



CLARE LOCKE

Clare has worked as a graphic designer for 25 years, with a strong focus on work with Catholic education and religious institute clients. She has contributed to *Madonna Magazine's Daily Prayers* for over 20 years and written scripture reflections for the Archdiocese of Brisbane and her local parish newsletter. In 2024, she published *Inside a Blessing*, a book of short prayers, poems and reflections. Clare works in Campus Ministry at Marist College Ashgrove, and is a member of the Marist Association.



ANN-MAREE O'BEIRNE RSM

Dr Ann-Maree O'Beirne RSM coordinates the Faith Formation Programs and lectures in Ecological Theology at BBI-TAITE. She is a member of the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea (ISMAPNG). Ann-Maree has a PhD in Theology, which explores an Ignatian motif in the theology of Karl Rahner, Denis Edwards, and Pope Francis's *Laudato Si'*. After fifteen years of teaching in secondary schools in Melbourne, Sydney and Dubbo, Ann-Maree joined the Sisters of Mercy in 2000.



GERARD MOORE

Gerard is the Principal and CEO of BBI-TAITE. He has written and taught widely in liturgy, social justice, and theology and now works extensively in the iCloud, delivering award units and adult formation courses across Australia.



CHARLES WADDELL

Charles Waddell is a priest of the Archdiocese of Perth and a sessional lecturer in Christology and ecclesiology for BBI-TAITE. He lives a contemplative life and serves as a prison chaplain. He recently published *Why the Risen Jesus Matters* (Strathfield: St Pauls Publications).

INTRODUCTION

≈ Gerard Moore ≈

The season of the 'lengthening of the days' prepares us to enter into those three long days from the Last Supper to the Cross and through to the Resurrection. The power of this triduum paints over the oddity of the celebration of a liturgical 'spring' in our Southern hemisphere autumn while the days themselves grow shorter. It is the feast of the Resurrection that becomes the measure of all things.

The seasonal prayers and liturgies offer an array of approaches to pursue through our Lenten journey. They call us to attend to the 'darkness' that envelops us and the Light that rescues us. Darkness and light are a metaphorical play that attunes us to our own inner sadness, the feelings of being lost, unwanted and unloveable that we meet in ourselves and others, the quiet despair about the direction our world is headed, the groaning of Creation. The dynamic is that the light pierces these and supports our wrestling. The Mass Collects remind that in the Eucharist we eat and drink unto forgiveness, nourishment, restoration and healing. While it may not come to mind as a first priority, we are made aware in the prayers that our fasting and Lenten discipline have an underlying theme of joy.

The perennial Lenten theme is our 'change of heart' (our *paenitentia*) and our preparation for Easter. We pray, fast and do good works in solidarity with our sisters and brothers who are running eagerly towards baptism. This is a reminder that our practices are not only individual but are carried through with the church as a whole. Across the entire

world collectively we fast, we pray, we support our catechumens, we embrace the grace of change of heart. We take up the Lenten fast with resurrection firmly in mind.

Each year has its own glimmer, reflecting the Light at work in our particular situation. Accordingly in our commentaries for the Sunday readings there are reflections of the Augustinian light that Pope Leo is offering us. Our Lenten light is refracted with his call to mission and his spiritual foundations in the writings of Augustine.

Our joyful Lent

It is the feast of the Resurrection that is the measure of all things! Lent is our time of preparation and reflection. The season is entrenched in our yearly cycle but its origins remain obscure. As the liturgical calendar developed, early church communities prepared for the celebration of the Resurrection with worship, fasting and prayer across the days dedicated to the Last Supper, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection on the first day of the week. At the same time, there were customs from the monasteries in which the monks fasted for forty days to identify with Jesus as he began his ministry. Eventually, in ways lost to history, both customs merged. There is something quite fitting about preparing for Easter while fasting 'with Jesus' as his ministry began, and praying intently with him as his death and the resurrection unfold.

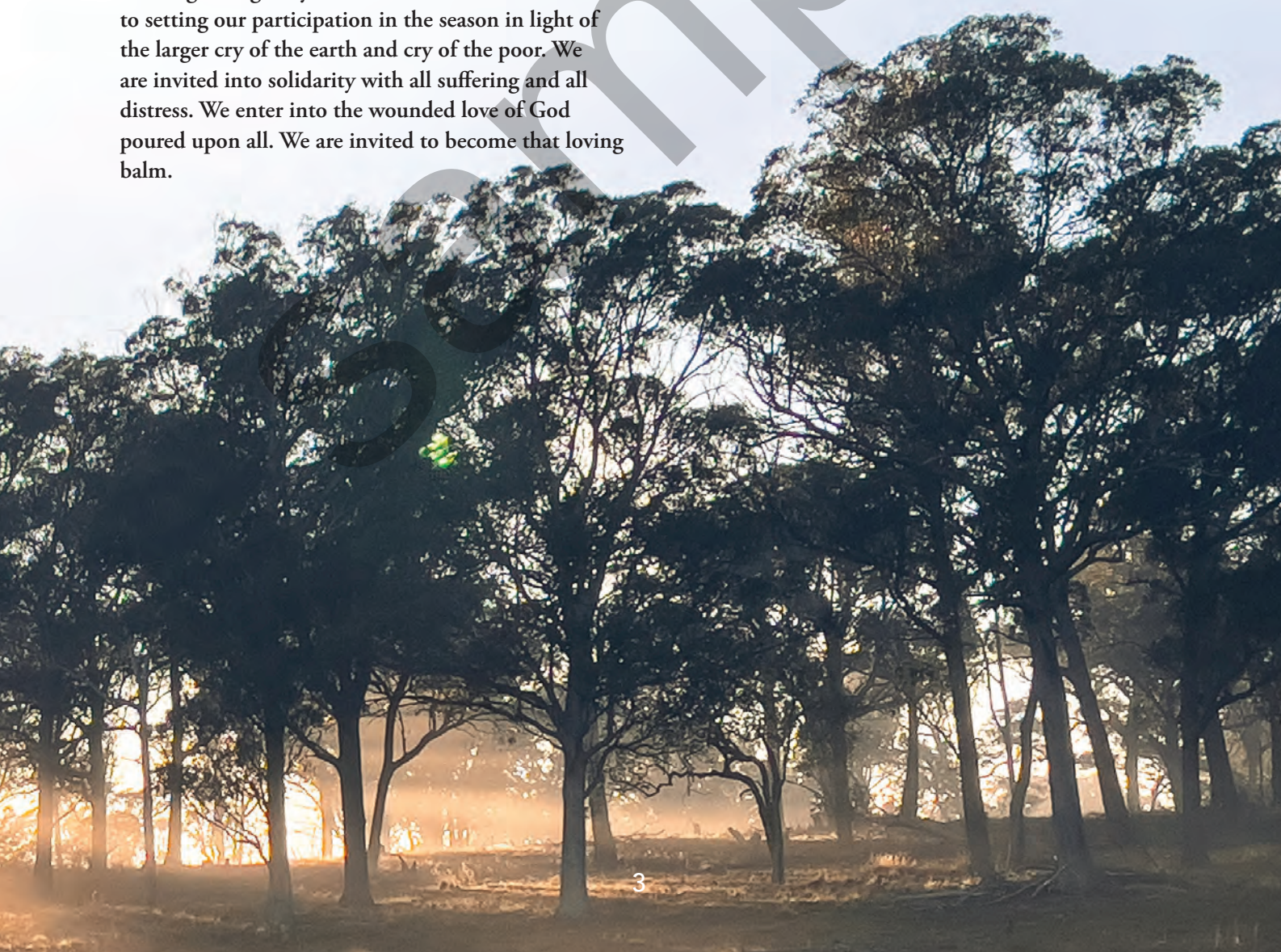
INTRODUCTION

This perspective of Jesus' preparation for ministry allows us to bring particular focal points to our discipline. There are leavening themes of mission and Augustinian spirituality as part of the reflections in the pages that follow. These enable us to bring forward the drive and direction of the late Pope Francis, and join them with the ministry and spirituality of Pope Leo. We are always people of faith in time and history, and are attuned to the great themes of our leaders. The ongoing foundations of Lent and Easter have their particular historical momentum.

Celebration of resurrection and the recreation of all things is the perfect platform for initiation into the life of faith through Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. Our Lenten activities support the candidates for Baptism as they move through the final phases of preparation to their public profession of faith. Immediately this moves our prayer from an individual to a communal plane. With this we are challenged to go beyond our selves and the church, to setting our participation in the season in light of the larger cry of the earth and cry of the poor. We are invited into solidarity with all suffering and all distress. We enter into the wounded love of God poured upon all. We are invited to become that loving balm.

It is here that the Lenten theme of joy emerges. Our self-denial and penitential reflection place us within the love of God for the world and the universe it is held in. As we recall the darkness within and face it, we become instruments of the light to be shone on the darkness without. We become instruments of mercy, nurses in the field hospital, bearers of the reign of God. In fasting, prayer, almsgiving, reading the scriptures, we recognise our call as missionary disciples: always fragile, yet bringers of light. There is joy in becoming instruments of the Lord.

Each of our Sunday reflections this year breaks open the readings to strengthen our self-denial and build our spiritual resilience. The diversity of voices gives us fresh insights into our Lenten tasks and our orientation for mission. The writers have attached questions to ponder, quotations to set us thinking, with graphics to engage our eyes. The objective, as of every Lent, is to become more fully people of the Resurrection.



We were dust made mud
Fired alive by the Creator's hot breath
It was enough
To be loved into life
Until that decisive moment
To eat or not to eat

The tempter whispered ambition
I said yes, you said yes
Because we didn't want to say no
To having it all

In another wilderness
Only a son of God could shake his head
At the devil's delusions
Even with the burn of the sun
And dust in his mouth
The word was bread enough
Love was enough

Clare Locke

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

≈ Clare Locke ≈

MATTHEW 4:1-4

... Jesus was led by the Spirit out into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, after which he was very hungry, and the tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to turn into loaves.' But he replied, 'Scripture says: Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' (p 28)

Deserts are often defined by emptiness and extremes, yet they are full of beauty, colour and life. They are environments of fragility, scarcity, and incredible adaptations. As a metaphor for our spiritual lives, time in the desert (or wilderness) invites us to look deeper, to listen to and withstand the silence, to notice the beauty. We might see in the deserts in our own lives that there is much more to discover if we are willing to take the time and pay attention.

And so, we take a deep breath as our Lenten pilgrimage begins. If we take seriously the idea that Lent is a time of prayer, fasting and abstinence, then it can feel daunting. We can struggle with what the season asks of us and where it's taking us.

Lent isn't 'me' time. It's God time. For despite the image of Jesus in Matthew's Gospel for our first week of Lent, it is also not an experience we enter entirely alone. We walk with God, with others – those with whom we journey in faith. The Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness and remained with him. His experience reflected that of the Israelites, his ancestors, who had spent years trying and often failing to honour their covenant with the Lord during their years of exile in the desert.

There's an intense hunger that precedes Jesus' time of trial and temptation. Whether physical, emotional or spiritual, hunger can make us weak and desperate, exposing our vulnerabilities and impairing our judgement. Yet even after a period of fasting, Jesus has the strength to resist the tempter's offer of power and prestige, remaining grounded in his tradition and the wisdom of scripture, rejecting what is false and shallow by naming what is true and lasting.

We hear in the devil's words the kind of temptation Jesus will later experience on the cross: the goading to draw on a higher power to feed himself, save himself and rule over others. But this is not Jesus' mission and not the kind of kingdom he will preach. Jesus' mission is to feed the hungry, to free the enslaved, to forgive sinners and to serve the lowly. And to give all love to God, his Abba.

During his time in the wilderness, away from his village, looking up to a night sky full of bright stars, we might imagine a deep, cosmic awareness growing in Jesus; an awareness of who he was and what he was being called to do. Over forty days and nights there surely formed in Jesus a strength of purpose that came not from the world's brittle idea of greatness, but from the magnificence of being known and loved within the universe of God.

In a letter to her sister Céline, St Thérèse of Lisieux describes Céline as a dew drop, formed overnight in a flower cup; pure, simple and fleeting. To be small – 'little' – before Christ is no easy task. We want to be recognised and remembered as talented, interesting, successful, popular. But to be small, humble and simple; this was St Therese's vision and what she believed Jesus wants of us. As Thérèse assured her sister, 'Our Beloved needs neither our brilliant deeds nor our beautiful thoughts.'

May we find ourselves as 'little' and yet loved and forgiven, deep in the desert of our Lenten journey, deep in the heart of Christ.

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

GENESIS 2:7-9, 3:6-7

The Lord God fashioned man of dust from the soil. Then he breathed into his nostrils a breath of life, and thus man became a living being.

The Lord God planted a garden in Eden which is in the east, and there he put the man he had fashioned. The Lord God caused to spring up from the soil every kind of tree, enticing to look at and good to eat, with the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the middle of the garden.

The woman saw that the tree was good to eat and pleasing to the eye, and that it was desirable for the knowledge that it could give. So, she took some of its fruit and ate it. She gave some also to her husband who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they realised that they were naked.

Genesis reminds that the living breath which animates all life allows us to become something more than dust. We are thinking, feeling, purpose-driven human beings. God's spirit awakens us into the world and all its possibilities. As babies we emerge helpless and so easily wounded. We are born needing love and the basics. With or without a stable, loving beginning to life, we hurt and are hurt, are afraid and cause fear, lie and are lied to. In life, we encounter all sorts of undesirable human behaviour, and sometimes we're the cause of it.

Sin speaks of our brokenness, our shame, our shortcomings and short tempers. Of our misgivings and mistakes. Sin is present in all the ways we avoid wholeness (holiness) and make choices that are not life-giving. Sin is our struggle through resentment and jealousy, addiction and pain, cowardice and pride. We seek to be washed clean of sin, realising that we will continue to wake up and stumble into the mud of it.

In Genesis, Adam and Eve are scripture's original sinners, giving into the allure of immortality and knowledge. Yet the serpent has seduced them with a half-truth. They cannot avoid death, and knowledge will become a burden and responsibility.

We live in a time when truth is hard to ascertain, the line between reality and fiction is increasingly blurred, and scams and fraud are a daily concern. As citizens of a technocratic age, we are ruled by digital, robotic and AI systems. They can make life easy, and they can make it a nightmare. Like the serpent of Genesis, the algorithms and apps hiss appealing half-truths at us: you can have everything your heart desires, be it happiness, beauty, popularity, prosperity and a long-life. Eat the apple from the tree. Buy the smart phone and the new car. Use the face cream and the fillers. Swipe the fruit right off the tree. Swipe right on the right face.

In life and before God and one another, we are granted the freedom to choose and to face consequence of our choices. May we move towards the freedom of wholeness and life in God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is helping me enter the desert of this Lenten season? What is holding me back? What can I leave behind?
2. Jesus endures a time of testing, trial and temptation. Looking back on my life, when have experienced a time or times of testing, trial or temptation? What are my reflections on my experience now?
3. In what way are the choices I am making truly life-giving?
4. What am I deeply 'hungry' for? And how will the stuff I hunger for nourish me and others?
5. How does 'ego' play a part in my life? What does becoming 'little' mean for me?