

Lenten Guide to Stillness

Practices for Paying Attention

Stillness is not doing nothing.

Stillness quiets our minds and settles our bodies so we can stop, notice, and make space for God. Lent has always been about reorientation: turning again toward God. Practices like fasting, prayer, and almsgiving are not ends in themselves; they train our attention and shape our desire. Lent is a season to practice attention to God's presence together.

Meditative Walking

Stillness through the Body



What it is

A slow, intentional walk where movement becomes prayer.

How to practice

Walk for 10–20 minutes in your neighborhood. If that feels too distracting, choose a nearby park. Walk the same route each time. Familiarity helps attention deepen.

Leave headphones behind so you can be present to your surroundings.

As you walk, begin to notice your breath. If helpful, match your breath to your steps (for example: inhale for three steps, exhale for three steps).

You may choose to pray quietly as you walk, repeating a line from the Prayer of St. Patrick:

*Christ with me, Christ before me,
Christ behind me,
Christ in me, Christ beneath me,
Christ above me,
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit,
Christ when I stand,
Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.*

Creation Care

Stillness through Attention to the Earth



What it is

Learning to linger with creation rather than consume it.

How to practice

Choose one non-human neighbor for Lent: a tree, plant, patch of sky, or body of water.

Visit it once a week.

Observe without photographing or analyzing.

Notice: *What is changing? What is slow? What exists without asking anything of you?*

Closing Reflection

Read Matthew 6:26–30 (The Message Translation).

Sit with this thought: you come to understand the depth of God's care for you by paying attention to how God cares for other living things. When you notice God's care for creatures that seem small, vulnerable, or easy to overlook, you begin to see how deeply God cares for you.

Fasting

Stillness through Desire



What it is

Fasting creates space to attend to desire. Rather than eliminating hunger, it helps us take notice of it—and to notice how our deepest longings are meant to draw us toward God and towards the most vulnerable.

Choose one fast

- One meal per week fast: choose one meal each week to skip or replace with something very simple (such as bread, soup, or fruit). Use the hunger you feel as an invitation to pause, pray, and notice what arises.
- One habitual comfort or form of consumption to step back from (snacking, sweets, alcohol, impulse buying).
- One digital fast (social media, news, streaming, or a daily window without your phone).
- One form of consumption to step back from for Lent, including divesting from or avoiding purchases from a particular company or industry.

During the fast

- Notice what comes up.
- Name it without judgment.

Closing reflection

As you end your fast, consider lighting a candle or reading the Beatitude from Matthew 5:6 (NRSV):

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Sit with these questions: What do I reach for automatically? What becomes visible when I step back?

Creative Practice

Stillness through Making



What it is

A creative practice reminds us that we are not what we produce, but people made for rest and delight.

Choose one practice

- Drawing or sketching
- Photography
- Painting or watercolor
- Collaging with found images
- Ceramics or working with clay
- Music-making (singing, guitar, piano, simple recording)

How to practice

- Set aside 20–30 minutes.
- No phone, no multitasking.
- Begin in silence.
- Create without a goal.
- When self-judgment arises, return to the process.

Closing the Practice

End with a simple breath prayer:

- Inhale: *I belong to God.*
- Exhale: *I am held.*
- Rest: *I was made for love.*

Take a few slow breaths. Let the words settle before you move on.