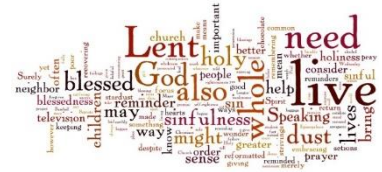


## A Prayer for Lent

The Lenten journey invites us all to examine, nurture and strengthen the roots of our faith; to pause and reflect on our relationships with self, others and our God. It is a quiet time of healing and renewal. Lent is a time to not just focus on our own life journey but also how we can support those who journey alongside of us.



The Letter of Paul to the Hebrews encourages us to *“consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”*

Take a few moments today to reflect on the communities to which you belong: family, work, friends, and faith communities. Think specifically of the community of this College.

**What binds you together?**

**How strong are your interwoven roots?**

**How can you nurture and strengthen these roots during the Lenten season?**

Lent takes us on the journey of Jesus towards the cross. The Gospels of Lent are redolent with images of loss and suffering mingled with new growth and hope.

### **Luke 9:21-25**

*He sternly ordered and commanded them not to tell anyone, saying, ‘The Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.’*

*Then he said to them all, ‘If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it. What does it profit them if they gain the whole world, but lose or forfeit themselves?’*

*(Pause for silent reflection and quiet sharing)*

The season of Lent calls us into a landscape. Though the imagery of wilderness is dominant in Lent, this is not the primary terrain that this season invites us to enter.

We enter Lent to enter our own earth, to make a pilgrimage into our own terrain. We move into this season to look at our life anew, to consider what has formed us, where we have come from, what we are carrying within us. Lent invites us to look at the layers that inhabit us: our stories and memories, our imaginings and dreams. This season invites us to notice what in our life feels fallow or empty, where there is growth and greenness, what sources of sustenance lie within us, where we find our inner earth crumbling to reveal something new. Lent opens our own terrain to us, that we might meet anew the God who lives in every layer of our life.

As this season begins, how might God be inviting you into the landscape that inhabits you? Is there a space within your soul that needs your attention, your compassion, your prayer? How might it be to open that space to the presence of Christ, who knows what it means to enter a difficult terrain, and who found sustenance there?



## Where the Breath Begins

Dry,  
and dry,  
and dry in each direction.

Dust dry. Desert dry. Bone dry.

And here in your own heart: dry,  
the centre of your chest a bare valley  
stretching out every way you turn.

Did you think this was where you had come to die?

It's true that you may need  
to do some crumbling, yes.  
That some things you have protected  
may want to be laid bare, yes.  
That you will be asked to let go  
and let go, yes.

But listen. This is what a desert is for.

If you have come here desolate,  
if you have come here deflated,  
then thank your lucky stars the desert is where  
you have landed—  
here where it is hard to hide,  
here where it is unwise to rely on your own devices,  
here where you will have to look, and look again  
and look close to find what refreshment waits  
to reveal itself to you.

I tell you, though it may be hard to see it now,  
this is where your greatest blessing will find you.

I tell you, this is where you will receive your life again.

I tell you, this is where the breath begins.

—Jan Richardson  
from *Circle of Grace*  
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