

3 book recommendations for Lent



Last year, Lent was, well, very different. It was a time of scrapping our own plans. Looking back, I honestly don't know what I gave up or intended to do during the penitential season. All I know is that, like many people, all my plans changed with the great Lent of 2020. Different fasts – such as that of not receiving the Eucharist for a few months – were issued outside of my own initiative.

This year may or may not look like a “normal” Lent for you. But if there is anything I learned from Lent 2020 it is that the season is not about what you do – how you pray, fast or give alms, though these are important – but how you allow God to transform your heart.

I could go on and on about this, but there are better experts out there. And since my Lenten study usually revolves around some spiritual reading, I figured I would share three books that God has used in recent years to lead me to greater transformation.

[‘Into Your Hands, Father: Abandoning Ourselves to the God Who Loves Us’](#)

I read this book a couple summers ago after my dad sent me home with a stack of spiritual books. This book in particular was his recommendation of where to start, and it is one I just might return to this Lent.

Written by Father Wilfrid Stinissen in the 1980s, it is a modern spiritual classic, in my opinion. Only about a hundred pages long, he packs in simple truths that many Catholics have never heard articulated about God's will, the beauty that can

be found in suffering, learning to hear God's voice and act upon it, recognizing and healing from past wounds, learning to live in true abandonment and freedom, and becoming God's instrument.

['Jesus the Bridegroom: The Greatest Love Story Ever Told'](#)

Last summer, I began listening to talks on Formed.org during my daily walks. One of my favorite people to listen to was Dr. Brant Pitre, a professor of Sacred Scripture at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans. Pitre's series on Jesus and the Jewish roots of the Eucharist (which stemmed largely from his book under the same title) was so rich that I began listening and reading anything by him.

If you want to approach the Crucifixion with a new perspective this Lent, this book is for you. "Jesus the Bridegroom" gives readers an understanding of what the coming of the Messiah meant in terms of Jewish tradition but also for us Christians today, inviting us into an intimate encounter with Christ.

['Knowing the Love of God: Lessons from a Spiritual Master'](#)

God's love for us demands a response. This lesson was confirmed around the time I read C.S. Lewis' classic "The Great Divorce" and uncovered my need to truly fall in love with God, after which the Lord prompted me to pick up this book, which had been collecting dust on my bookshelf.

"Knowing the Love of God" was originally a collection of retreat talks given by Father Garrigou-Lagrange, who served as the theological advisor to four popes and oversaw the doctoral work of the future Pope St. John Paul II. While these talks were given to religious men and women, the lessons about who God is and what that means for the life of a Christian is just

as applicable for the laity.

Of the books recommended, this is probably the densest, but the subject matter makes it the perfect read for Lent, touching on topics such as mortification, humility, poverty, the cross and perseverance in mental prayer, all extending from a deeper understanding of the love of God for us.

Pick up any of these books, and you are ready for a reflective Lent. If you struggle with spiritual reading, calculate how many pages you would need to read each day (usually no more than five pages a day) to complete the book by Easter. Happy reading!

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