

## FOLLOWING CHRIST THIS LENT



An offering from the  AUGUSTINE INSTITUTE and  Ignatius press



### FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR

Dr. Ben Akers

[ben.akers@augustineinstitute.org](mailto:ben.akers@augustineinstitute.org)

As you journey through Lent to prepare for Easter, FORMED invites you to make a spiritual pilgrimage to the Holy Land this year with *Triduum: A Spiritual Pilgrimage*, which takes you to the sites of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. Supplement your spiritual pilgrimage to the Holy Land by investing in and igniting your spiritual life with devotional content like *The Divine Mercy Chaplet* with the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal and *Glimpses Along the Way*, a collection of three audio talks on the Stations of the Cross. Lent, however, is not a time exclusively for adults! For your children, we suggest *Lent with Brother Francis*, a series of short, animated videos that present Lent in an engaging and fun way for your children—and available in English and Spanish. Yet Lent will not last forever. Be sure to check out the *Easter in Art Series*, joining Taylor Kemp and me as we dive into three pieces of art—a mosaic of Jesus' descent into hell, the *Anastasis* (Resurrection), as well as *The Resurrection* by Piero della Francesca and Giotto di Bondone's *Resurrection*. In these videos, we explore the theological themes and motifs present in these depictions of the Easter event, in the hopes of providing you with ample material to contemplate in your prayer time. The team at FORMED hopes you enjoy these resources, and please be assured of our prayers for you!

As we enter into Lent and prepare for Easter, invite your parishioners to make a spiritual pilgrimage in order to know God better and to draw closer to him.

*Triduum: A Spiritual Pilgrimage* is a beautiful, 30-minute documentary that takes viewers on a walk through the locations of the events of Holy Week. Beginning in the Upper Room with the Last Supper, the film incorporates religious art and Scripture in the telling of the most important days of human history.

The faithful take a virtual walk with Jesus, descending from the Upper Room into the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives. There, the olive plants grow from root systems that existed at the time of Jesus.

From the Mount of Olives, viewers enter into the house of Caiphas, the High Priest, and see the empty cistern where Jesus is lowered to contemplate his impending death of salvation.

The journey continues along the *Via Dolorosa*, where each of the events in the Stations of the Cross is marked for pilgrims.

The faithful bow their heads as they walk into the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, built on the site of Jesus' Crucifixion and death.

Viewers traverse the road to Emmaus, where Jesus appears to two disciples, and stand on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus commands Peter three times to “feed my sheep.”

*Triduum: A Spiritual Pilgrimage* draws Catholics and those with open hearts and minds to experience a deeper understanding of the events from the evening of Holy Thursday to the evening of Easter Sunday, providing rich meditations for daily life.



Watch the Augustine Institute's *Triduum: A Spiritual Pilgrimage* with your parishioners this Lent on FORMED.

# HIGHLIGHTS ON FORMED

As Catholics undertake 40 days of preparation for Easter, FORMED suggests two programs: the first, to enrich your parishioners' understanding of Easter, and the second, to provide a guide for going deeper in relationship with Christ.



## Easter in Art

The three-part series *Easter In Art* looks at pieces of sacred art that depict the events of Easter. Each runs 20 minutes and is hosted by Dr. Ben Akers and Taylor Kemp.

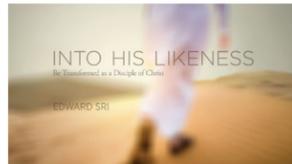
An 11th-century mosaic in Basilica di San Marco in Venice depicts Holy Saturday, when Jesus “descended into hell,” according to the Apostles’ Creed, to bring the faithful dead to eternal life.

In *The Resurrection* by Piero della Francesca, Jesus emerges triumphantly from the tomb that resembles an altar, rising above the sleeping guards. The 15th-century work resides in the Museo Civico in Sansepolcro in Tuscany.

Mary Magdalene reaches for the risen Jesus in Giotto di Bondone’s *Resurrection (Noli me tangere)*, as Jesus instructs her: “Do not hold me.” This 14th-century work rests in the Cappella Scrovegni (Arena Chapel) in Padua.

## Into His Likeness: Be Transformed as a Disciple of Christ

Dr. Edward Sri’s *Into His Likeness* provides a Lenten companion to those who, while recognizing their weaknesses, wounds, and sins, know the truth of their higher calling: to be perfected in God’s love and transformed in Christ.



Sri describes the ancient disciple-rabbi relationship in which the disciple would follow the rabbi so closely that the dust kicked up from his rabbi’s feet would cover him. Today, we are called to follow our Rabbi, Jesus Christ, so closely that we are covered with his life, changed, and made new.

*Into His Likeness* is well suited to small group study, with participant and leader guides to accompany the six 30-minute videos on formed.org.

# LITURGICAL CALENDAR

Beginning with Ash Wednesday on March 2 and throughout the Lenten season, encourage your parishioners to enrich their faith and devotion with these resources on formed.org:

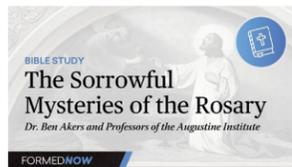


## March 19 St. Joseph

This hour-long examination of the life of Joseph of Nazareth, *St. Joseph: Our Spiritual Father*, features interviews with leading experts and theologians, in addition to powerful firsthand testimonials. More than words, St. Joseph’s actions reveal his excellent model of Christian virtue in his obedience to God and trust in Divine Providence.

## Lent for Adults

In *A Bible Study on the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary*, Dr. Ben Akers sits down with professors from the Augustine Institute’s graduate school to discuss each of the Rosary’s Sorrowful Mysteries, along with its biblical roots, to help parishioners journey with Mary this Lent.



## Lent for Children

This Lent, we are excited to announce that *Brother Francis* will have daily videos for kids as he accompanies them throughout this season. He will teach kids about the Cross of Christ, the hope of his Resurrection, and the joy of life in him. \*available in english and spanish.

# PARISH SPOTLIGHT

Marybeth Hay first met *Brother Francis* as an early childhood educator at Our Lady of the Valley (OLV) Regional School in Uxbridge, Massachusetts.

Struggling to find good resources to support her preschoolers, Hay went to the parish’s director of Religious Education. The director showed Hay two bookshelves full with the animated *Brother Francis*, who explains the faith to children up to eight years of age.



“He’s so relatable,” Hay said. “He plays basketball while talking about Jesus.”

Now the director of Catechesis and Education for OLV and for her parish’s religious education program, Hay uses the *Brother Francis* videos on formed.org for a wider audience of children.

On the first Friday of the month, for example, the schoolchildren gather to pray the Rosary.

The *Brother Francis* video *The Rosary: A Special Way to Pray* taught the children to pray the Rosary in a way that was “fun, attractive, and engaging,” Hay said.

She praised the series for being appropriate for young children, using language they understand.

And it’s not just children who appreciate *Brother Francis*.

“For parents who do not have a strong faith base,” Hay said, “the *Brother Francis* videos are a way to provide religious instruction at home.”



One family Hay knows includes *Brother Francis* in a rotation of faith-based videos that their children watch as alternatives to television.

“Families enjoy the fact that there’s good, faith-based quality videos for them,” Hay said.

Hay calls the *Brother Francis* series of four Lenten videos “one of my faves.”

“We’re in the desert,” Hay said, explaining that relating Lent and its importance can be particularly difficult.

“The videos are so incredibly helpful,” Hay said. The children learn that there is “eternal hope.”

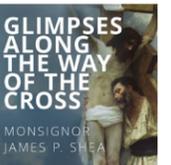
“If you can make religion and the children’s faith fun, then you can keep them going,” Hay said.

# DEVOTIONAL CONTENT

Often, our Lenten resolutions include adding a daily devotion in our prayer lives. It is easy to get off-track, but these resources from FORMED give your parishioners a companion in faith:

## Glimpses Along the Way of the Cross by Monsignor James Shea

In three beautiful talks, Monsignor James Shea serves as a guide along the Stations of the Cross, teaching viewers how to open their hearts to Jesus’ loneliness and suffering on the way to Calvary. Monsignor Shea weaves together insights from Fr. Richard Neuhaus, Caryll Houselander, Archbishop Fulton Sheen, and Dr. James Edwards to take us into the depths of Christ’s agony and back out again, into the joy of what his sacrifice means for us.



## The Divine Mercy Chaplet—Franciscan Friars of the Renewal

In this nine-minute video, the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal lead viewers through the Divine Mercy Chaplet, accompanied by inspiring footage of people around the world at work and prayer.