



FASTING
AND
Feasting

A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE
FOR LENT 2019

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LISTEN, BELOVED

By Martha Smock

Do you hear me? I am speaking to you, not in words but in your inmost heart, in the silence of your soul.

I am the Christ in you.

I speak, yet it is not I but the Father who speaks. I am the Christ in you, the beloved of the Father in you.

Do you hear me? I am speaking to you now.

I am speaking to you of infinite possibilities that are before you, of wonderful powers that are within you.

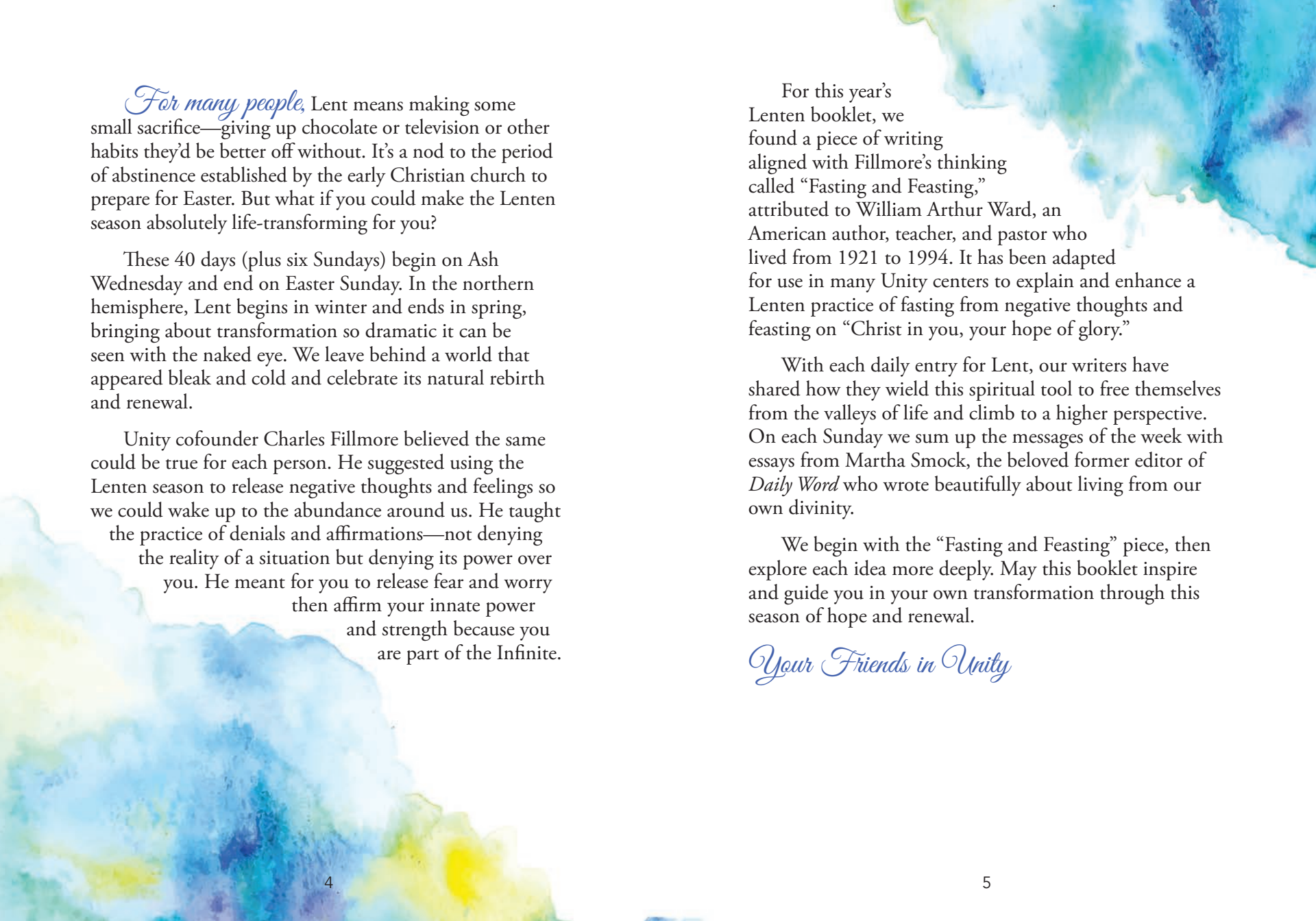
I am speaking to you of mysteries of the Spirit, of everlasting love, of unending, eternal life.

I am speaking to you of inner reality and outer realization.

I am speaking to you of greatness and goodness, of dreams fulfilled, of prayers answered, of appreciation of things present, of anticipation of things to come.

Listen, beloved ...

Unity author Martha Smock (1913–1984) served as editor of *Daily Word* magazine for more than 35 years. The Sunday selections for this Lenten season have been adapted from her book, *Listen, Beloved*, first published in 1980.



For many people, Lent means making some small sacrifice—giving up chocolate or television or other habits they'd be better off without. It's a nod to the period of abstinence established by the early Christian church to prepare for Easter. But what if you could make the Lenten season absolutely life-transforming for you?

These 40 days (plus six Sundays) begin on Ash Wednesday and end on Easter Sunday. In the northern hemisphere, Lent begins in winter and ends in spring, bringing about transformation so dramatic it can be seen with the naked eye. We leave behind a world that appeared bleak and cold and celebrate its natural rebirth and renewal.

Unity cofounder Charles Fillmore believed the same could be true for each person. He suggested using the Lenten season to release negative thoughts and feelings so we could wake up to the abundance around us. He taught the practice of denials and affirmations—not denying the reality of a situation but denying its power over you. He meant for you to release fear and worry then affirm your innate power and strength because you are part of the Infinite.

For this year's Lenten booklet, we found a piece of writing aligned with Fillmore's thinking called "Fasting and Feasting," attributed to William Arthur Ward, an American author, teacher, and pastor who lived from 1921 to 1994. It has been adapted for use in many Unity centers to explain and enhance a Lenten practice of fasting from negative thoughts and feasting on "Christ in you, your hope of glory."

With each daily entry for Lent, our writers have shared how they wield this spiritual tool to free themselves from the valleys of life and climb to a higher perspective. On each Sunday we sum up the messages of the week with essays from Martha Smock, the beloved former editor of *Daily Word* who wrote beautifully about living from our own divinity.

We begin with the "Fasting and Feasting" piece, then explore each idea more deeply. May this booklet inspire and guide you in your own transformation through this season of hope and renewal.

Your Friends in Unity

Fasting and Feasting

40-DAY PRACTICE FOR LENT

Adapted From William Arthur Ward

I fast from judging others.
I feast on beholding the Christ in them.

I fast from emphasis on differences.
I feast on the oneness of all life.

I fast from apparent darkness.
I feast on the reality of light.

I fast from thoughts of illness.
I feast on the healing power of God.

I fast from words that pollute.
I feast on phrases that purify.

I fast from discontent.
I feast on gratitude.

I fast from anger.
I feast on patience.

I fast from pessimism.
I feast on optimism.

I fast from worry.
I feast on divine order.

I fast from complaining.
I feast on appreciation.



I fast from negatives.
I feast on affirmatives.

I fast from hostility.
I feast on nonresistance.

I fast from bitterness.
I feast on forgiveness.

I fast from self-concern.
I feast on compassion for others.

I fast from anxiety.
I feast on eternal Truth.

I fast from discouragement.
I feast on hope.

I fast from facts that depress.
I feast on thoughts that uplift.

I fast from suspicion.
I feast on Truth.

I fast from shadows of sorrow.
I feast on the serenity of silence.

I fast from problems that overwhelm.
I feast on the power of prayer.

And now in the silence of prayer, I rest.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, 2019

I fast from judging others.

The most powerful determinants of our life experiences are the stories we choose to tell ourselves. We decide who's a villain and who's a victim. We decide whether a plot is sinister or tragic. Spiritual mastery involves being conscious about the narratives we tell, then editing out those passages that deviate from Truth.

How? Jesus advised removing the proverbial "log" from our own eyes first. Example: If I cast a coworker as a domineering bully, my job is to handle my own feelings of frustration or indignation and see the situation more clearly. If I cast my neighbor as a gross slob, it's on me to release tension or anxiety that arises and be present to my own need for order. I also check for any areas of my life where I might be a bully or a slob!

As we recognize the instances in which we're judging another's actions to be wrong or bad, we clear the slate of consciousness for a broader perspective to emerge. With practice, it's a perspective that is increasingly shaped by love and acceptance.

THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 2019

I feast on beholding the Christ in others.

At the Mayo Clinic—acclaimed for its integrative approach to medicine—the Sisters of St. Francis teach the staff to treat every patient as if they were treating Jesus Christ. That's good advice for all of our relationships, but what about those whose Christ light is well-camouflaged?

My late uncle was artful in his practice of seeing the best in everyone and everything. I once served him a steak so tough and overcooked it was hard to cut, let alone swallow. Unfazed, Uncle Bob choked down a bite and without a hint of irony declared, "Good flavor!"

It's brilliant because it affirms a legitimate attribute without reference to deficiency. Philippians 4:8 suggests the same formula: "Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."

No matter the appearance, every person whose path crosses ours presents us with a gift that's commendable and worthy of praise. We often find it pleasing. Sometimes what is just and pure may simply be a divine appointment to practice unconditional love. Like the doctors at the Mayo Clinic we, too, are called (and equipped) to treat others as if they were Jesus.

—Rev. Kurt Condra

FRIDAY, MARCH 8, 2019

I fast from emphasis on differences.

When I am centered in my divine essence, seeing and experiencing the world through the single eye of Truth, I realize there is no such thing as differences. So instead of emphasizing differences—wanting people to think, act, and look like me—my mind and heart open to the freedom of Spirit and the beauty of creation.

I choose to see the One appearing in a myriad of colors, textures, and sounds that enrich my world. Through my inner power of understanding and wisdom, differences become a diverse banquet of creative expression. I see differences with curiosity, wonder, and awe—an opportunity to enrich my life and expand my worldview.

When I find myself resisting or emphasizing differences, I shift my thinking. I take a few moments to contemplate the unity of all life. The miracle is that all appearances are simultaneously occurring within the mind of God, the One.

SATURDAY, MARCH 9, 2019

I feast on the oneness of all life.

Permeating all existence, all cultures, all traditions, all points of view and experiences, is the One life. Knowing this brings peace to my soul. I exist within that oneness. I relax in this awareness, realizing the goodness of God is always present, regardless of any situation I perceive.

When I lift up my vision to the oneness of all life, I behold the beauty of Spirit in everyone and in all things. I am one with the life of God. I am one with the love of God. I am one with the creative power that created the entire universe. There are no limits to the divine power that resides within me.

Today I feast on the oneness of all life. I am free, alive, beaming with the radiance of Spirit, and flowing in the river of life. Everything I see, everyone I encounter is the One in its multiplicity and expression.

—**Rev. Elizabeth Longo**

SUNDAY, MARCH 10, 2019

God Is, You Are

By Martha Smock

God is love.
You are one with love.
Love fills your heart and
blesses your life.

God is power.
You are one with power.
Overcoming power, the power
to do and be, is yours.

God is peace.
You are one with peace.
Nothing can disturb or upset you.
You are calm and serene.

God is strength.
You have strength of body, mind,
and emotions, strength of soul.

God is life.
You are one with life.
You feel the life of God
flowing through you,
a mighty healing,
cleansing, renewing stream.

God is substance.
You are one with substance.
From God comes a continuous outpouring
of plenty for every need.

God is light.
You are one with light.
Light shines in and through you.
You see your way clearly.

God is wisdom.
You are one with wisdom.
Your mind is illumined.
You know what to do and you do it.

God is good.
You are one with God.
You are one with all good.

