

Newman on Lent

Sunday 6 (Final)

Perseverance and Fidelity

“Will You Also Go Away?” (John 6:68)

Course Overview

As we conclude our Lenten journey, the Church presents a profound and sobering question from Our Lord:

“Will you also go away?”

This question strikes at the heart of the spiritual life—not how we begin, but whether we remain faithful when the path becomes difficult.

Lent is not merely a season of effort, but a call to lasting transformation through perseverance.

Recap of the Lenten Journey

Week 1 – The Call to Conversion

- Awakening from spiritual complacency
- Examination of conscience
- Recognizing the urgency of conversion

Key Insight: We must not assume we are “spiritually fine” God calls us to deeper awareness.

Week 2 – Self-Denial and Discipline

- Formation of the will through sacrifice
- Necessity of mortification
- Rejecting comfort and ease

Key Insight: “*No Cross, No Crown*” holiness requires discipline.

Week 3 – The Cross as the Path

- Centrality of the Cross in Christian life
- Suffering as strength, not weakness
- Rejecting a comfort-centered faith

Key Insight: True Christianity embraces sacrifice, not convenience.

Week 4 – Interior Mortification

- The hidden spiritual battle
- Purification of pride, speech, impatience
- Interior vs. exterior sacrifice

Key Insight: The deepest transformation happens within.

Week 5 – Sharing in Christ’s Passion

- Redemptive value of suffering
- Offering trials for others
- Union with Christ through sacrifice

Key Insight: Love is proven through suffering united to Christ.

Core Theme – Perseverance in Faith

At the end of Lent, the essential question becomes:

Not: Did I begin well?

But: Will I remain faithful?

Many followed Christ when:

- Miracles were visible
- Faith felt inspiring
- Consolation was present

But they left when:

- Teachings became difficult
- Sacrifice was required
- Consolation disappeared

Part I – Perseverance Without Consolation

Spiritual Reality

Over time, the soul often experiences:

- Dryness in prayer

- Fatigue in discipline
- Loss of motivation

This is known as loss of consolation.

Newman's Insight

God permits this to strengthen the soul:

- Faith over feelings
- Love over emotion
- Fidelity over enthusiasm

Key Principle

True fidelity begins where consolation ends.

Part II – Fidelity Without Recognition

The Hidden Life

Most acts of holiness are unseen:

- Quiet prayer
- Resisting temptation
- Small sacrifices

The Temptation

- “This isn't working”
- “I'm not growing”
- “Why continue?”

The Truth

God values **faithfulness**, not visible success.

Key Principle

Faithfulness is measured by perseverance, not results.

Part III – Why Many Turn Back

Newman identifies key reasons:

1. **The Cost Becomes Clear**

- Sacrifice becomes real
- 2. **Loss of Consolation**
 - Faith no longer “feels” rewarding
- 3. **Love of Comfort**
 - Preference for ease over sacrifice
- 4. **Fear of Long-Term Commitment**
 - Beginning is easy—persevering is difficult

The Response of Faith

“Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.”

Part IV – Carrying Lent Beyond Easter

The Danger

Treating Lent as temporary:

- Prayer fades
- Sacrifices disappear
- Old habits return

Newman’s Warning

True conversion must be permanent, not seasonal.

What Should Remain?

- A consistent prayer life
- Ongoing discipline
- Continued self-denial

Key Principle

Lent is meant to change how we live not just how we feel for a season.

Reflection Questions

1. **What must permanently change in my life?**
 - A habit?
 - A sin?

- A pattern?
- 2. **What spiritual practice must continue?**
 - Daily prayer?
 - Mortification?
 - Silence?

Final Resolution

1. Choose One Lasting Discipline

Examples:

- Daily structured prayer
- Weekly fasting
- Control of speech
- Spiritual reading

2. Enter Holy Week Intentionally

- Reduce distractions
- Embrace silence
- Walk with Christ in His Passion

Conclusion

At the end of Lent, the question is:

Did I become more faithful?

Christ does not ask for perfection He asks for perseverance.

To remain:

- In dryness
- In difficulty
- In hiddenness

“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.” — Revelation 2:10