

## *Lord, who throughout these forty days. . .*

Sunday February 18<sup>th</sup> is the first Sunday in Lent this year. Lent, a season of penitence and spiritual renewal began with Ash Wednesday on February 14<sup>th</sup> and ends on Easter (March 31). It is a 40 day period (not counting Sundays) of renewal and recommitment to the Christian life, examining our lives in light of Christ, whom we are to follow. We will sing the classic Lenten hymn this Sunday, "*Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days*,". The text of this hymn includes the major themes of the Lenten season: Fasting and prayer (stanza one); Struggle with Satan and sin (stanza two); Dying to self, meditation on scripture (stanza three); Penitence (stanza four); and looking toward the joy of Easter (stanza five).

Forty is a number with special biblical significance. It rained for forty days and nights when the earth was overtaken by floodwaters, and Noah waited another forty days before opening the window of the Ark. Israel wandered in the desert for forty years. Jesus was seen on earth following the resurrection for forty days. And, Christ's forty days in the wilderness provides the primary paradigm for the forty days of Lent.

"*Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days*," was written by Claudia Hernaman (1838-1898), the English daughter of an Anglican minister, and also the wife of an Anglican priest. She was devoted to the religious education of children and wrote many hymns intended to teach scripture and religious practices to young children. "*Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days*" appeared first in her *Child's Book of Praise; A Manual for Devotion in Simple Verse* (1873). It is based on the account of the temptation of Jesus found in three Gospels -- Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13. In this hymn Christ's life becomes a model for how his followers should confront temptation. The first two lines of each stanza focus on a response of Christ when he faced temptation; the last two lines encourage Christians to model their behavior on Christ's example. This is a familiar pattern for children's hymns in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

"*Lord, who throughout these forty days*" recounts Jesus' temptation story with the express intention to encourage us by example in our ongoing personal battle with temptation in the wilderness of our conflicting desires. The title and content of this hymn place us firmly in the season of Lent and allude to its prescription for the mindful practice of the spiritual disciplines of these penitential days.

### ***Come and begin your Lenten journey Worship Service with Holy Communion 10 AM***

*Lenten Lunch & Learn Bible Study Wednesdays at 12 Noon. The God We Can Know: Exploring the "I AM" sayings of Jesus*

***1 Lord, who throughout these forty days,  
For us did fast and pray,  
Teach us with you to mourn our sins,  
And close by you to stay.***

***2 As you with Satan did contend,  
And did the vict'ry win,  
O give us strength in you to fight,  
In you to conquer sin.***

***3 As you did hunger bear and thirst,  
So teach us, gracious Lord,***

***To die to self, and always live  
By your most holy word.***

***4 And through these days of penitence,  
And through your Passion-tide,  
Forevermore, in life and death,  
O Lord, with us abide.***

***5 Abide with us that when this life  
Of suffering is past,  
An Easter of unending joy  
We may attain at last!***