

SATURDAY, MARCH 23

So the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the council, and said, "What are we to do? This man is performing many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy both our holy place and our nation."

John 11: 47–48



I've been reading a book on the history of theological education. I promise this is more exciting than it might seem at first. As it turns out, the history of how Christians have formed and educated followers of Jesus cuts to the very heart of the faith itself. And this is especially so when in the season of Lent.

In the early church, one of the main vehicles for formation was a multi-year catechesis prior to baptism. Created at a time when Christianity was persecuted by Rome, this catechesis sought to prepare disciples to faithfully live out Christian values in a culture that opposed the faith at every turn. Rome, for instance, had little

tolerance for Jesus' many critiques of wealth and power, nor did Roman officials understand or value Christians' compassion for the poor.

Interestingly, as the centuries passed, this multi-year catechesis was shortened until it became the 40-day period of Lent. This stretch we are walking together, then, is what's left of a very ancient road that many walked before us, training Christians to be an alternative and countercultural community throughout time.

Today's readings

Psalm 85:1–7 | Ezekiel 37:21–28

John 11:45–53

Do you approach the season of Lent as a time of learning? How can you be more intentional in embracing Lent as a period of catechesis and religious instruction?