A Sanctified Art LLC is a collective of artists in ministry who create resources for worshipping communities. The Sanctified Art team works collaboratively to bring scripture and theological themes to life through film, visual art, curriculum, coloring pages, liturgy, graphic designs, and more. Their mission is to empower churches with resources to inspire creativity in worship and beyond. Driven by the connective and prophetic power of art, they believe that art helps us connect our hearts with our hands, our faith with our lives, and our mess with our God.

Learn more about their work at sanctifiedart.org.
Lent begins in the wilderness. The Spirit guides Jesus into the wilderness where he comes face to face with temptation and struggle. Yet, in his forty days of fasting, resisting, and wandering, Jesus is shaped and formed for ministry. Similarly, through the wilderness of Lent, we are invited to surrender to the wild leadings of the Spirit. We rarely enter the wilderness willingly, but hopefully through our wandering we remember who we are and whose we are. The wilderness can become sacred even if it remains dangerous. There is no wilderness space too harsh or threatening for God’s love.

We encourage you to walk through these weekly readings and prompts at your own pace throughout the season of Lent. May the art, reflections, poetry, and journaling allow you to wander and wonder your way through the wilderness. In the wilderness our faith is born, nurtured, challenged, and resurrected. May it be so for you this season.

Artfully yours,

The Sanctified Art Creative Team

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Poem on Wilderness

THE WILDERNESS IS A PLACE OF BEGINNINGS

“Begin again,” life whispered in my ear;
For some days are beginning days.
Some days are designed to be the day we try again,
And on those days—the sun rises for you.
On those days, the birds sing for you.
On those days, God is cheering for you.
That’s just the way God and beginnings work.

For when your heart is broken and your life is in pieces,
Or when the addiction or the depression have found their way back
into your bones,
Or when you lose sight of the person that you were called to be,
The wilderness will sing to you, “Begin again.”

“Begin again” with the person you want to be.
“Begin again” with the person you want to love.
“Begin again” with the knowledge of your faith.
“Begin again.”

The sun is rising for you.

Prayer by Sarah Are
First Week of Lent | MARCH 1-7

**READ** MATTHEW 4:1-11

**FROM THE ARTIST | LAUREN WRIGHT PITTMAN**

I depicted Jesus divided, containing in his divinity all the stars and galaxies of the universe on the left, and the layered dust of his humanity on the right. For me, this text highlights the tension held within Jesus’ identity, particularly through the tempter’s efforts to lead Jesus toward his human nature while betraying his divinity. If Jesus were to succumb to the tempter’s requests, he would have access to the unlimited power, influence, and riches the world has to offer, which are referenced by the stacked, columned structures on the right side of the image. If Jesus chooses to resist the temptations and stay planted in the wilderness, honoring his divinity and call, he chooses the wilderness path—one that would ultimately lead to his demise.

Jesus’ ministry is defined by this standoff with the tempter. He is asked to turn stones into bread; instead he goes on to share meals with those deemed unworthy, and miraculously shares two loaves of bread with five thousand people. He is asked to stand on the pinnacle of the church and enlist the help of angels; instead he goes on to turn over tables protesting the temple’s entanglement with capitalism and greed. He is asked to take his place as earthly ruler over all; instead he will take the shape of a servant, dying a state-sanctioned death.

Jesus is led by the Spirit into the wilderness immediately after being baptized. The wilderness has something to offer Jesus, and instead of taking a detour around it, he chooses to encounter its lessons. When we find ourselves in the wilderness places of life, may we take an open, curious posture, ready to be challenged, shaped, and sent.

**PRAYER**

Breathe deeply as you gaze upon the image on the left. Imagine placing yourself in this scene. What do you see? How do you feel? Get quiet and still, offering a silent or spoken prayer to God.
READ  GENESIS 2:15-17; 3:1-7

FROM THE ARTIST  |  HANNAH GARRITY

In this art piece, I imagined an apple picked from the tree—an apple, like the one on a teacher’s desk. The apple itself breaks the border of its frame like the knowledge of good and evil broke the barriers set by God. Within the apple, synapses get more and more dense as the eye moves left to right.

When my son was little I remember seeing a searing image on a poster at a doctor’s office. There were a few brain scans. One was of an infant at birth. Then there were a couple of scans of brains that were a few months old. The newborn’s brain was spacious; the visual appeared to me like a blank canvas. The brains of the babies that were older showed a vast shift. One was significantly more full than the other. In my recollection, the poster was promoting talking and reading to your little ones. The fuller scans showed children who had been exposed to more words. Having taught school for many years, my reaction was visceral. We do not have much time, I thought. As Adam and Eve began their journey into the world, away from Eden, I imagine that their brains continued to fill with connections, building knowledge. Does the knowledge of good and evil subject us to social vulnerabilities like judgment, ridicule, intimidation? Does our awareness of good and evil set us up for divisiveness? We cannot strive for less awareness. Like Adam and Eve, we innately yearn for more. In this age of constant information flow, our temptation to read only what we agree with looms like the forbidden fruit in Eden. Serpents are lurking. Yet the truth is discernible. We all know good from evil.

PRAYER

In quiet contemplation, color in the page on the left, reflecting on how the imagery illuminates what you find in the scripture and artist’s statement. Conclude with a silent or spoken prayer to God.