

# A Gentler Lent: Resources to Nurture Your Soul Without Burnout

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glimmers of faith, writing, and the whole life

## A Gentler Lent: Resources to Nurture Your Soul Without Burnout

A group I'm hosting plus other practical and prayerful ways to walk through Lent this year

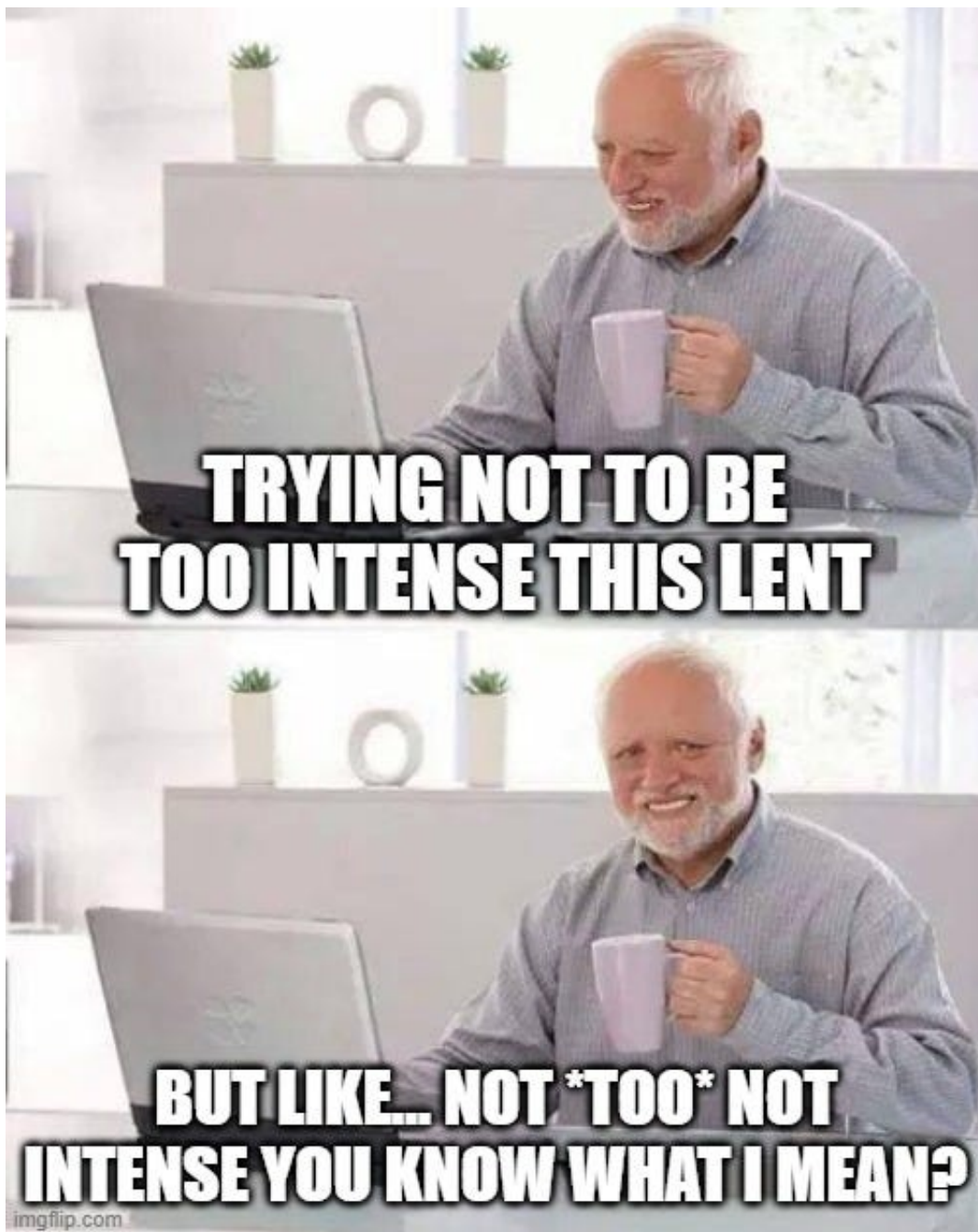
NICOLE M. ROCCAS

FEB 14



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Lent is meant to be a season of life-giving repentance, prayer, and renewal. But if you're anything like me, it's also a time when you might try *a little too hard*—and end up missing the point entirely. Or you've burned out in the past, and now struggle to try at all, out of fear you'll overdo it again.



## **When Lent Gets a Little Too Intense!!!!!! 🤯**

The first time I attempted "real" Lenten fasting was kind of a disaster. Even though I knew the basic practices that surrounded Orthodox fasting, coming from a Protestant background, I simply couldn't comprehend that when I saw the words "strict fast" on the calendar (which in Orthodox circles typically means abstaining from animal products), I was allowed to eat. So I often just... didn't. By Holy Week, I was convinced I needed to go *all in*. No food, barely any water, for three days straight before Pascha/Easter. By the time the Paschal vigil rolled around, I was dizzy,

clammy, and so nauseous that I ended up vomiting partway through the service. Turns out, not only had I overdone it—I also had undiagnosed mono. And reactive hypoglycemia. It took me weeks to recover my physical strength from that experience. Years later, I'm still recovering spiritually from the tendency to over do it and then spiral into a pit of despondency.

Lent isn't about how hard we push ourselves. It's not an excuse to punish our bodies or prove our spiritual "seriousness." A gentler, more embodied Lent may look *easier* from the outside, but in practice, it's harder. It requires us to guard against pride and zealotry. It asks us to tune in—to our bodies, to Christ, and to the needs of others. It asks us to stay with the discomfort of needing and hunger rather than dissociating and white-knuckling our way through.



Jesus Himself moved slowly. He took his time through life, waiting until it was opportune to start His public ministry, and taking His time with His encounters and journeys. If He didn't sprint through His ministry, nor push His followers to the brink of collapse, why do we often act as though we

have to?

If you're craving a Lent that's prayerful but not punishing, structured but not rigid, here are some resources to guide your way.



## 1. Regain Lent 2025: A 6-Week Group Program Based on *Time and Despondency*

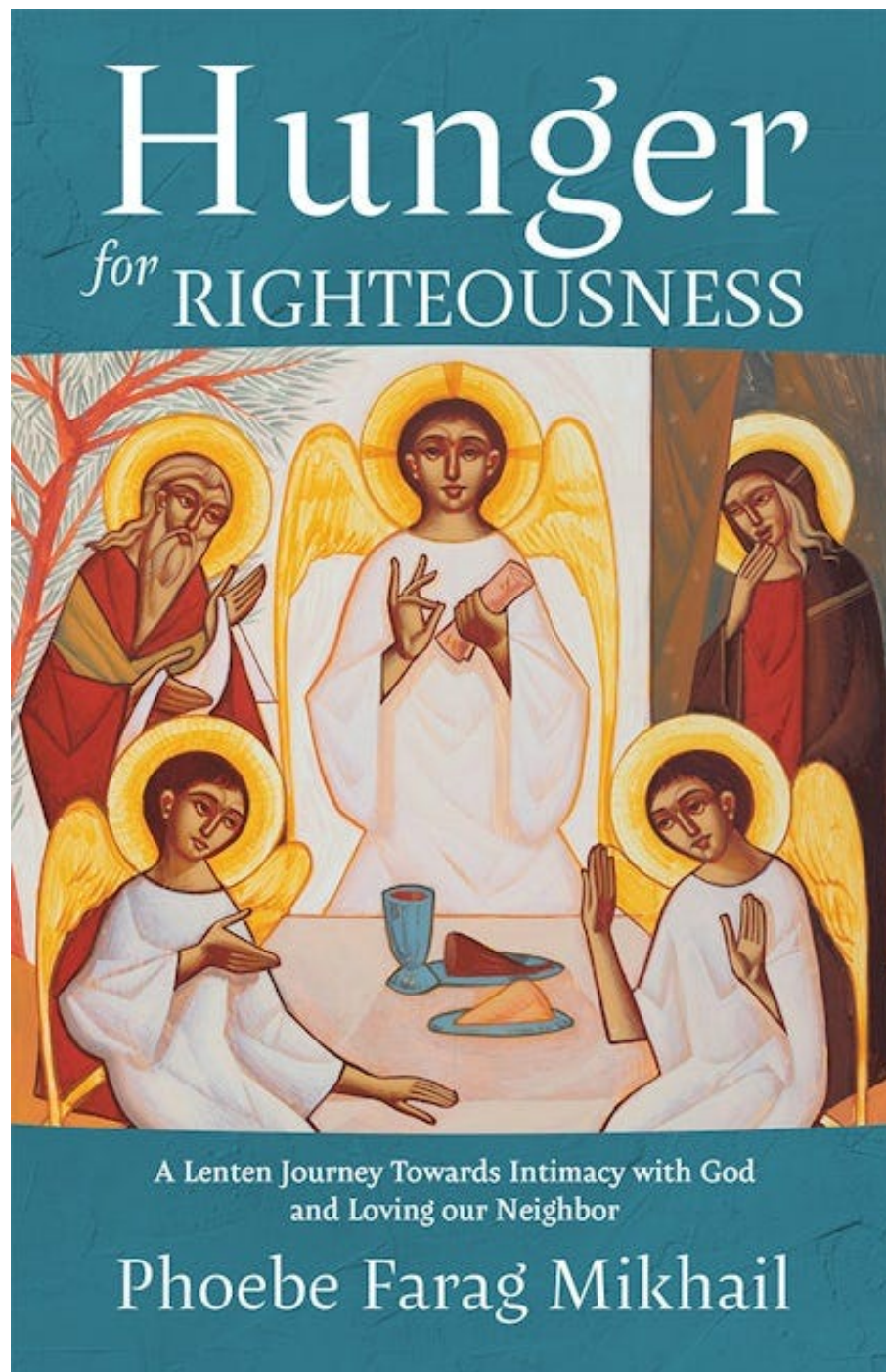
Struggling with spiritual exhaustion or feeling disconnected from Lent? *Regain Lent* is a 6-week guided journey through my book *Time and Despondency*, offering structured readings, group coaching sessions, and a supportive online community to help you walk through Lent with intention

and care. We'll explore despondency (*akedia*), a spiritual struggle that often appears as restlessness, apathy, or discouragement, and how to re-engage with faith in gentle, life-giving ways.

This is **not** a "Lent Bootcamp." Instead, it's an opportunity to slow down, reflect, and support your broader Lenten effort.

- ◆ **Dates:** March 3 - April 12, 2025 (Evening option available!)
- ◆ **Where:** Online via Zoom & a private community
- ◆ **Cost:** ~\$50 USD (\$75 CAD) | *Early Bird Discount available!* (See order page)

**[Learn more & register here](#)**



## 2. New Release! *Hunger for Righteousness: A Lenten Journey Towards Intimacy with God*

Phoebe Farag Mikhail's (Phoebe Farag Mikhail) book *Hunger for Righteousness* offers a fresh perspective on fasting, prayer, and repentance—rooted in community and justice rather than individual striving. It challenges us to see Lent as an invitation to deeper love for God and neighbor. I love this book because it invites us into a virtue we talk a lot

about in theory but often sidestep in practice. It would be easy to approach the theme of righteousness in a rigid, harsh, or legalistic way, but Phoebe does a brilliant job inviting us into a supportive and edifying journey towards the vital but under-examined role of righteousness in our faith. I also love that the book is written for both Eastern Orthodox, Orientals, and non-Orthodox Christians to learn from and enjoy.

 [Order here](#)



### **3. Spiritual Fasting and Trauma Recovery (Webinar Recording)**

For some, fasting can be spiritually enriching. For others—especially those with past trauma—it can be a source of distress. This webinar explores why fasting can be difficult for trauma survivors and provides practical strategies to approach it with safety and freedom.

◆ **Includes:** 70-minute webinar, slides, self-reflection worksheet

**>> [Access the webinar here](#)**



## **4. Building a Trauma-Sensitive Prayer Rule (Webinar Recording)**

What if prayer itself is a struggle? This webinar addresses how trauma can



shape our experience of prayer and offers strategies to build a sustainable, life-giving prayer practice.

◆ **Includes:** Webinar, slides, practical guidance for clergy & laypeople

>> Watch here



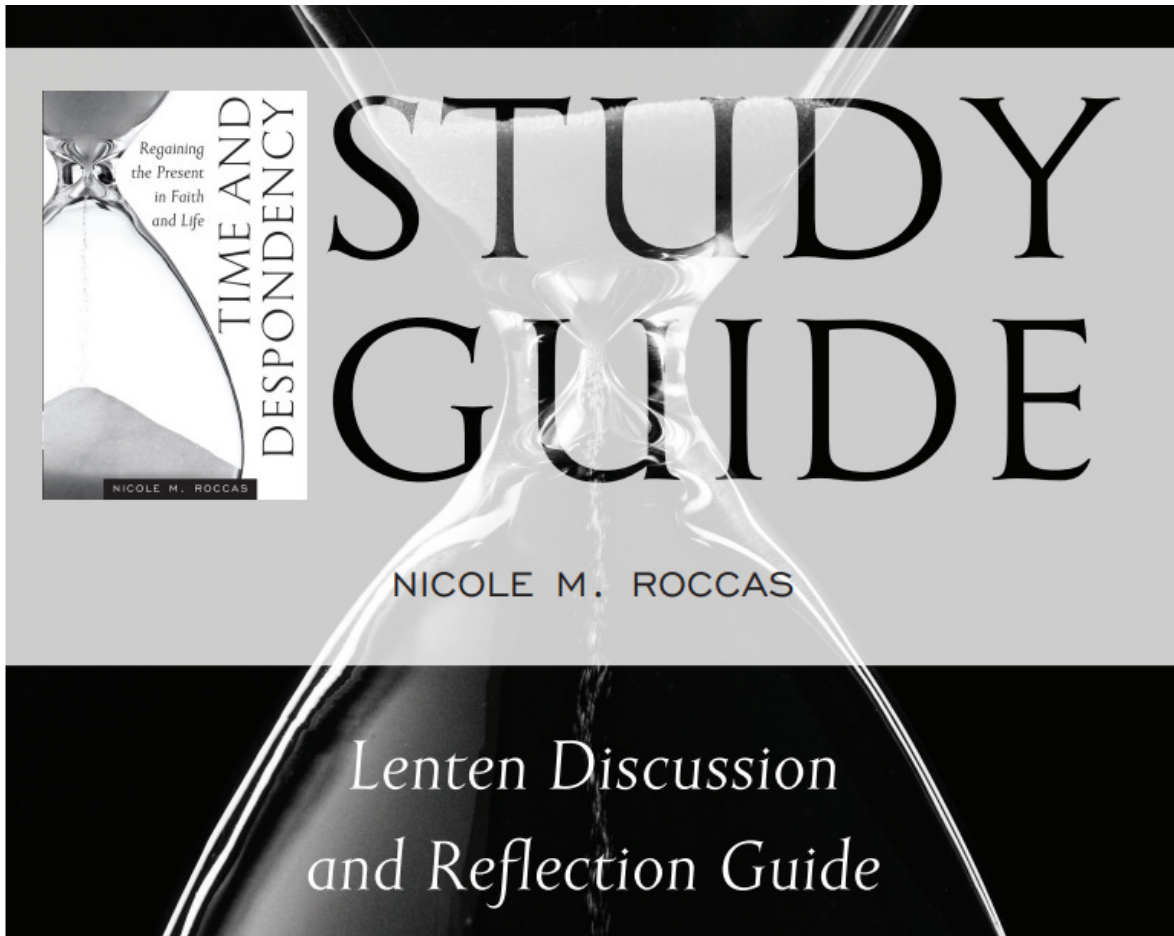
## 5. Forgiveness & Reconciliation After Trauma (Webinar Recording)

Confession, when practiced safely, can be a powerful tool for healing. But when misused, it can cause lasting damage. This webinar explores confession from a trauma-informed perspective—helping both clergy and

laypeople integrate this sacrament into their healing journey.

◆ **Includes:** 90-minute webinar with expert insight

>> [Access here](#)



## **6. *Time and Despondency* + Free Lenten Study Guide**

If a full program isn't for you, my book *Time and Despondency* is available as a standalone read. It explores how our relationship with time shapes our spiritual struggles and offers hope for reclaiming the present moment in Christ. A **free** Lenten study guide is available for download on the publisher's website.

 [Order your copy & get the study guide](#)

# A Lent of Grace, Not Guilt

Lent isn't a contest. It's not about how much you can endure or how perfectly you can adhere to fasting rules. It's about deepening your love for Christ and His Church. Sometimes, that means challenging yourself. Other times, it means stepping back and acknowledging your limits.

A gentler Lent doesn't mean a less meaningful one. It means walking intentionally, staying present, and allowing grace—not guilt—to shape your journey. May your Lent be one of renewal, reflection, and rest in God's love.

**Which of these resources speaks to you the most? What else would you suggest for a gentler Lent? Drop a comment or reply—I'd love to hear how you're approaching Lent this year.**

*I've recently updated the »[Community Guidelines](#) of this blog to guide discussion moving forward. Thanks for helping me continue to make this a safe, supportive, and gracious community.*

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