

February 13, 2024

DURING LENT

"Give alms ... pray to your Father ... fast, [but] do not look gloomy"
~ Matthew 6:2-16

Why Do We Pray?

As Catholics, we believe that personal prayer is not complete unless our prayers are joined with the community of faith who is the living Body of Christ. The Sunday liturgy is the greatest form of prayer because together we receive the gift of the Holy Eucharist — the very real presence of the Risen Christ. Attending weekly (or daily) Mass is an essential part of a healthy prayer life.

Deepening Prayer

Throughout the season of Lent, we are called to deepen our prayer life. For some of us, this means beginning a habit of daily prayer, setting aside time each day to share our hopes, joys, fears and frustrations with God. Praying first thing in the morning, while the house is still quiet, or talking to God while on your commute to work are simple ways to integrate prayer into everyday life. Praying the Rosary, visiting the Blessed Sacrament or attending a daylong silent retreat may bring you to new places in your relationship with God.

Why Do We Fast?

Lent has traditionally been the season where we give something up, often sweets or a favorite food, in order to focus on the sacrifice Christ made on the cross. But fasting is much more than a means of developing self-control. Fasting is spiritual and physical purification; the pangs of hunger remind us of our hunger for God. Fasting and abstinence help us to participate more fully in the cross of Christ.

Fresh Ways to Fast

- In the Western world, fasting from food is a reminder of our abundance and a way to walk in solidarity with people around the world who struggle with daily hunger and starvation. Pause to remember families that face hunger as you fast.
- Limiting social-media exposure or fasting from the 24-hour news networks are ways to quiet our minds and open our hearts to transformation.
- We might also strive to fast from anger, road rage, workaholism, judgment or jealousy.

Lent is a time to fast from those things or habits that may have become a roadblock to our relationship with Christ.

Church Guidelines for Fasting and Abstinence

The law of abstinence obliges those 14 years of age and older not to eat meat on Fridays throughout the season of Lent as well as on Ash Wednesday. The law of fast obliges all those from ages 18 through 59 to refrain from eating between meals and to limit their eating to one full meal and two lighter meals on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

Why Do We Give Alms?

Charitable giving is a very ancient practice; almsgiving was normative long before the time of Jesus. The Lenten call to almsgiving means making the needs of other people our own. One of the central lessons of the cross is compassion; the heavy burdens we carry help us to appreciate the suffering in others. Sharing our material goods is often just the beginning of real Christian giving. We are also called to share our time tending to people in need.

Outside-the-Box Ideas for Giving

- Volunteer at a neonatal center, giving premature babies a human touch
- Tutor a child or mentor a college graduate
- Increase your donation to your local parish

Lent is a time to prepare for Easter; it is a necessary prelude. The sacrificial practices of Lent prepare and purify us in body, mind and spirit for the passion of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

LENT

The Season of Lent: When Catholics Repent

The season of Lent is one of the most significant events of the year for the Catholic Church. Lent starts on Ash Wednesday and continues for forty days (excluding Sundays), ending on Holy Saturday, the day before Easter Sunday.

A Word About Lent

The word "Lent" comes from the Old English meaning, "spring." Like so many other holidays, Lent is a season-based holiday that, over the centuries, has become almost synonymous with spring. In other languages, the holiday is referred to as "Quadragesima," a term that means "the 40 days."

A Season That's 40 Days Long

The season of Lent lasts for forty days because this is the biblical number of days necessary for preparation. For instance, Moses stayed on Mt. Sinai for forty days and Jesus spent forty days in the wilderness, praying and fasting.

For Catholics, Lent is a period of ongoing prayer, fasting and abstinence. It's about commemorating Jesus Christ's death for our sins and His ultimate resurrection for our salvation. Traditionally, Lent has been a period in which Catholics "give up" something they enjoy. Surrendering a particular pleasure (such as a favorite food or drink or going to the movies) is done in the name of repentance. It also serves as a means of imposing a discipline on our wills—to prove (to ourselves) that we are not slaves to pleasure. It's important to note that this Lenten denial of pleasure is not an end in itself, but rather a *means* to an end.

Fasting is Voluntary

Fasting and abstinence during the season of Lent is done on a strictly voluntary basis. The fasting is not strict by any means. According to a definition as specified by the Catholic Church, Lenten fasting allows the faster to consume one complete meal and up to two snacks a day, as long as those two snacks do NOT add up to one meal.

It is important to note that fasting is NOT allowed to take place on Sundays because Sunday is the day Christ rose from the dead. It is therefore inappropriate to fast or atone for our sins on such a glorious day. In the Christian faith, Sundays—even Sundays during the season of Lent—are cause for celebration.

What Lent Means Today

Today, Lent has evolved from its strict time of penance into a statement of solidarity for those about to be baptized. Those already baptized can use the Lenten period to reaffirm their baptismal promises as well. The point on all counts is to affirm—or reaffirm—one's connection and commitment to Jesus Christ. Accordingly, during Lent, believers must bring their questions, their sinfulness, their hunger and their thirst—through the Lenten sacrifice—to attest to their need to grow spiritually and their longing for God.

As stated earlier, the season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14, 2024. On Ash Wednesday (the Day of Ashes) the foreheads of Christians are marked with ash in the sign of the cross to symbolize their devotion to God. The ashes used on Ash Wednesday are the burned remains of the palms from the previous year's Palm Sunday.

Other significant days that occur during the season of Lent are:

- **Palm Sunday** occurs on the Sunday before Easter and marks the beginning of Holy Week. April 10
- **Holy Thursday** (Maundy Thursday) is the day of the Last Supper (or the First Mass). In addition, this meal was a celebration of Passover. March 28
- **Good Friday** occurs the Friday before Easter and commemorates Christ's crucifixion. March 29
- **Holy Saturday** is the day Christ was laid in the tomb. It is the last day of Lent, the day before Easter. March 30
- **Easter Sunday** marks the day of Christ's Resurrection and is the first day after Lent. March 31

BOOK FAIR – Dress Down Day Feb. 26 Event Feb. 28/29/Mar. 1

DAY LIGHT SAVINGS TIME

Mar 10, 2024 - Daylight Saving Time Starts

When local standard time is about to reach

Sunday, March 10, 2024, **2:00:00 am** clocks are turned **forward** 1 hour to

Sunday, March 10, 2024, **3:00:00 am** local daylight time instead.

Sunrise and sunset will be about 1 hour later on Mar 10, 2024 than the day before.

There will be [more light in the evening](#).

Also called [Spring Forward](#), [Summer Time](#), and [Daylight Savings Time](#).

Daylight saving time 2024 in Canada will begin at 3:00 a.m. on Sunday, March 10, 2024

SPRING BREAK – March 11 – March 22