

Lenten Guidelines

PRAYER

Catholics are encouraged to pray more during Lent, especially with Scripture. Lent is also an ideal time to receive the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation in preparation for the celebration of Christ's Passion, Death and Resurrection.

FASTING AND ABSTINENCE

Catholics of age 14 and older should abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and all the Fridays of Lent. In addition, on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, Catholics from age 18-59 should fast, limiting themselves to one full meal and two smaller meals each day.

ALMSGIVING

Moved by the sacrifice of Christ, many Christians combine almsgiving with fasting, giving to the poor the money they saved by eating, drinking or buying less as they rely more upon God's abundant grace.

"Beloved: His divine power has bestowed on us everything that makes for life and devotion, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and power. Through these, he has bestowed on us the precious and very great promises, so that through them you may come to share in the divine nature, after escaping from the corruption that is in the world because of evil desire. For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, virtue with knowledge, knowledge with self-control, self-control with endurance, endurance with devotion, devotion with mutual affection, mutual affection with love. . . . Be all the more eager to make your call and election firm, for in doing so, you will never stumble. For, in this way, entry into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ will be richly provided for you."

2 Peter 1:3-11

LENT

*Grant, almighty God,
through the yearly observances of holy Lent,
that we may grow in understanding
of the riches hidden in Christ
and by worthy conduct pursue their effects.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

2012

Mealtime Prayers for Lent

Lord Jesus Christ, may our Lenten fasting turn us toward all our brothers and sisters who are in need. Bless this table, our good food, and us. Send us through Lent with good cheer, and bring us to the fullness of Passover. Amen

We thank you, O Lord, who give us this food to eat. We pray that you may also provide food for those who are hungry and gather us all together at the table of your heavenly kingdom. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Remembering Those Preparing for the Easter Sacraments

*Who is preparing for Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist in my parish family?
I will remember them by name during this Lenten Season as they prepare to encounter Christ in these
wondrous Sacraments of Initiation.*

O God, who though you are ever the cause of the salvation of the human race now gladden your people with grace in still greater measure, look mercifully, we pray, upon your chosen ones, that your compassionate and protecting help may defend both those yet to be born anew and those already reborn. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Daily Readings

HEARING THE WORD OF RECONCILIATION AND CONVERSION

ASH WEDNESDAY WEEK

February 22 Mt 6:1-6,16-18
February 23 1 Peter 5:1-4
February 24 Is 58:1-9a
February 25 Ps 86:1-6

FIRST WEEK OF LENT

February 26 Mk 1:12-15
February 27 Mt 25:31-46
February 28 Is 55:10-11
February 29 Ps 51
March 1 Mt 7:7-12
March 2 Mt 5:20-26
March 3 Mt 5:43-48

SECOND WEEK OF LENT

March 4 Mk 9:2-10
March 5 Lk 6:36-38
March 6 Is 1:10, 16-20
March 7 Mt 20:17-28
March 8 Jer 17:5-10
March 9 Mt 21:33-46
March 10 Ps 103:1-4, 9-12

THIRD WEEK OF LENT

March 11 John 4:5-42
March 12 Lk 4:24-30
March 13 Psalm 25
March 14 Mt 5:17-19
March 15 Jer 7:23-28
March 16 Mk 12:28-34
March 17 Lk 5:1-11

FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

March 18 John 9:1-41
March 19 Jn 4:43-54
March 20 Ez 47:1-9, 12
March 21 Is 49:8-15
March 22 Jn 5:31-47
March 23 Ps 34:17-21,23
March 24 Jer 11:18-20

FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

March 25 Jn 11:1-45
March 26 Lk 1:26-38
March 27 Jn 8:21-30
March 28 Jn 8:31-42
March 29 Gn 17:3-9
March 30 Ps 18:2-7
March 31 Ez 37:21-28

HOLY WEEK

April 1 Mk 11:1-10
April 2 Is 42:1-7
April 3 Jn 13:21-33,36-38
April 4 Mt 26:14-25
April 5 Jn 13:1-15

“We ought never to forget that *the word of God is a word of reconciliation, for in it God has reconciled all things to himself* (cf. 2 Cor 5:18-20; Eph 1:10). *The loving forgiveness of God, made flesh in Jesus, raises up the sinner. Through the word of God the Christian receives light to recognize his sins and is called to conversion and to confidence in God’s mercy.* To have a deeper experience of the reconciling power of God’s word, the individual penitent should be encouraged to prepare for confession by meditating on a suitable text of sacred Scripture and to begin confession by reading or listening to a biblical exhortation such as those provided in the rite. When expressing contrition it would be good if the penitent were to use *a prayer based on the words of Scripture*, such as those indicated in the rite. When possible, it would be good that at particular times of the year, or whenever the opportunity presents itself, individual confession by a number of penitents should take place within penitential celebrations as provided for by the ritual, with due respect for the different liturgical traditions; here greater time can be devoted to the celebration of the word through the use of suitable readings.”

- Pope Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini*

Lectio Divina: Praying Deeply with God's Word

The Lenten journey invites us to become more sensitive to the voice of the Lord in our lives, especially when He speaks to us in the Sacred Scripture. Prayerfully reading a short passage from the Bible each day allows us to be fed by God speaking to us in His Word.

STEP ONE: *PRAEPARATIO—PREPARATION*

Slow down, be still and place yourself trustingly into the presence of the Lord. Call upon the name of the Lord by making the Sign of the Cross. Humbly ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten your mind and your heart to hear God speaking through these words He Himself has inspired.

STEP TWO: *LECTIO—READING*

Carefully and slowly read the short passage of Scripture. Listen to every word and pause after every sentence. Let the Word of God sink in to your mind and heart. If necessary read it over again.

STEP THREE: *MEDITATIO—MEDITATION*

Meditate upon the words, especially upon phrases or ideas that might have caught your attention. Use your heart and imagination to hear the Lord speaking directly to you. Place yourself into the passage context and become a part of God’s self-revelation to humanity.

STEP FOUR: *ORATIO—PRAYER*

Conclude your time by offering a prayer from your heart that has been inspired by your meditation. Perhaps it is a prayer of praise or an act of contrition. Perhaps your meditation has led you to a new insight or prompts you to make a new resolution. Speak to God from your heart.