

Lent and Our Catholic Faith

WHAT IS LENT?

Lent is the annual preparation for Easter, calling us to reform our lives and to open our hearts to the spiritual blessings God has promised to bestow upon us. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday.

WHAT MUST I DO?

Catholics in good health, ages 18-59, are required to fast and abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, and to abstain from meat on all other Fridays of Lent. Fasting means one main meal with two light snacks eaten daily. Youth 14-17 are to abstain from meat on those days.

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

During Lent we should practice three main disciplines: prayer, fasting and almsgiving. These offer us opportunities to grow in faith and love for God.

WHY PRAYER, FASTING AND ALMSGIVING?

Lent calls us back to the basics of our faith. Prayer, fasting and almsgiving are key personal responsibilities of our faith, the minimum expected of us to show our appreciation for God's gift of divine life, which we want to nurture within us. There is never a question that Christ's followers are to pray, fast and give alms, only in how and in what spirit they are to do them.

WHY DOES LENT SEEM SO NEGATIVE, SO FOCUSED ON SIN?

Starting with the somber symbol of ashes, Lent indeed has its negative side, in part because Lenten discipline aims to make us aware of the reality of our own sinfulness and weakness. But the purpose of Lenten discipline is positive. Self-denial helps us empty ourselves so we can be filled with God. It helps us hunger and thirst for the food and drink that our souls need. But do not undertake Lenten disciplines as if they, by themselves, might heal us, make us holy or earn God's favor. Their purpose is to open our hearts so that the Holy Spirit can work in us.

SHOULD I SET GOALS FOR LENT?

Yes, and reflect prayerfully about your Lenten resolutions before making them. Then make a list, but be modest. You may be setting yourself up for disappointment if you set unrealistic goals. Doing a little with love and devotion is spiritually more beneficial than trying to do much, but doing it halfheartedly.

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Lent & Holy Week

Events and Opportunities

◆ **LENT SMALL GROUP IGNATIAN RETREAT**

Experience the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola in a modified format. St. Ignatius created the Exercises based on his experiences of God after his conversion and he continued to develop the Exercises throughout his life. The two main goals are: to deepen our relationship with Christ and to grow in spiritual freedom so that we can be a co-laborer with Christ in building the Kingdom of God.

◆ **FIRST FRIDAY EUCHARISTIC ADORATION**

We earnestly follow Jesus' example of prayer and fasting and, in song, we pray that he will abide with us that we may attain an Easter of unending joy. Inspired by his example, add First Friday Adoration to your Lenten practice so that you may abide with (and meditate upon) the Risen Christ, present in the Eucharist. Abide for 10 minutes, an hour, or the whole morning as your schedule allows.

◆ **NOVENA OF GRACE IN HONOR OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER**

We invite you to pray the Novena of Grace in honor of St. Francis Xavier. It's traditional to pray the Novena from March 4-12 for a particular intention, to ask for what you desire from God. Pray for your own needs, those of your loved ones, or the needs of the world.

◆ **INDIVIDUAL RECONCILIATION**

Opportunity for individual reconciliation will be offered during our Reconciliation & Taizé Prayer service and at 4:30 before 5 pm Stations of the Cross on Fridays (except on Good Friday when Stations is at Noon).

◆ **STATIONS OF THE CROSS**

Pray the Stations of the Cross together and come to a deeper appreciation of the Paschal Mystery through imaginative meditation. Renew your Baptismal Covenant and rise once again with Christ at the Glorious Solemnity of Easter.

◆ **LENTEN FISH FRY**

Join us on select Fridays (see schedule on the right) in the STM School dining hall for a delicious all-you-can-eat meal of fried cod, mashed potatoes, French fries, mac & cheese, coleslaw, dinner roll, cookie, assorted beverages, and for purchase: beer, wine and soda.

◆ **RECONCILIATION & TAIZÉ PRAYER**

Join us for an hour of Taizé Prayer and encounter the mystery of God through the beauty of simplicity in word and music. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is available for those who desire it during the course of this meditative prayer.

In Preparation of and during Lent

LENT SMALL GROUP IGNATIAN RETREAT

Feb. 26-April 16, Noon ◆ Feb. 27-April 17, 7:30 PM ◆ Feb. 28-April 18, 7:30 PM

FIRST FRIDAY EUCHARISTIC ADORATION

March 1 & April 5: 7:15 AM with Noon Benediction

NOVENA OF GRACE MASS

March 4-12: Weekday, 7:15 AM ◆ Saturday, 4:30 PM ◆ Sunday, 8 am & 10:30 am

ASH WEDNESDAY

March 6: 7:15 AM, 8:30 AM, 7 PM

INDIVIDUAL RECONCILIATION

March 8, 15, 22, 29, April 5 & 12: 4:30 PM (prior to 5 pm Stations of the Cross)

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

March 8, 15, 22, 29, April 5 & 12: 5 PM (also see Good Friday)

LENTEN FISH FRY

March 15, 29 & April 12: 5:30 - 8 PM

RECONCILIATION & TAIZÉ PRAYER

April 11: 7 PM, with an opportunity for individual reconciliation

Holy Week

PALM SUNDAY: APRIL 14

Saturday (April 13) 4:30 PM ◆ Sunday, 8 AM & 10:30 AM

HOLY THURSDAY: APRIL 18

7:15 AM Morning Prayer

7 PM Mass of the Lord's Supper

8:30 PM Eucharistic Adoration

10 PM Night Prayer

GOOD FRIDAY: APRIL 19

7:15 AM Morning Prayer

Noon Stations of the Cross

7 PM Passion of the Lord

HOLY SATURDAY: APRIL 20

8 AM Morning Prayer

8 PM Easter Vigil

EASTER SUNDAY: APRIL 21

8 AM & 10:30 AM