

# LENT

prayer • fasting • almsgiving

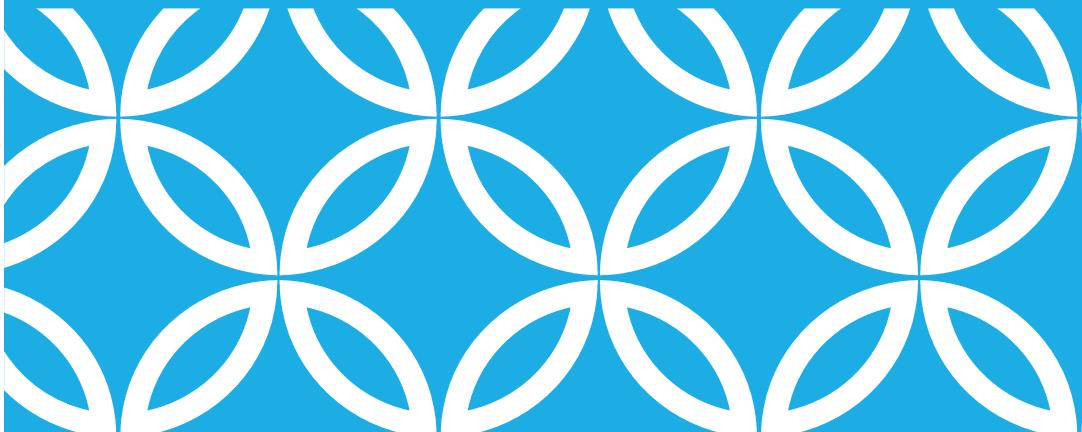
ROMANS 6:23 NRSV

FOR THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH, BUT THE GIFT OF GOD IS ETERNAL LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD.



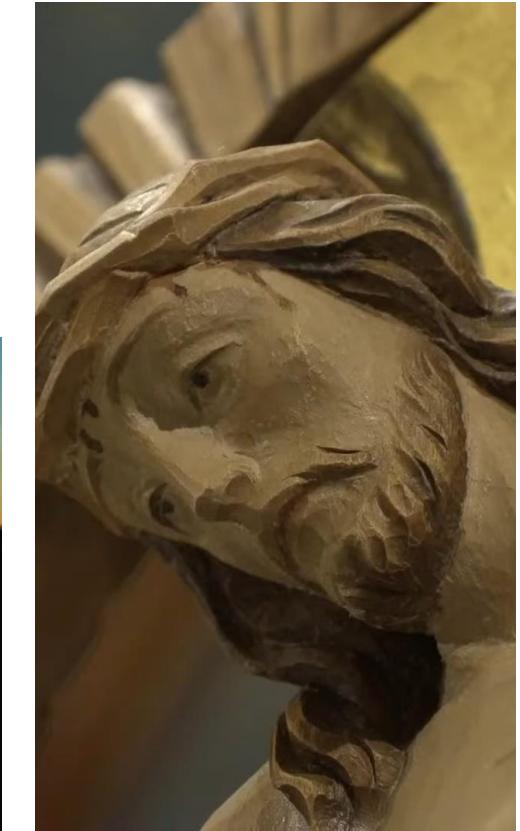
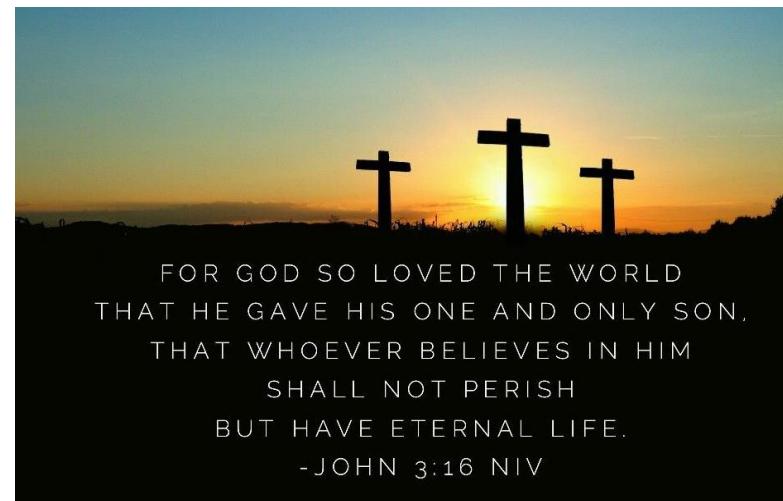
# LENT

The word Lent derives from the **Old English word “lencten”** which referred to the **lengthening of days or springtime** (when Lent falls in the northern hemisphere).



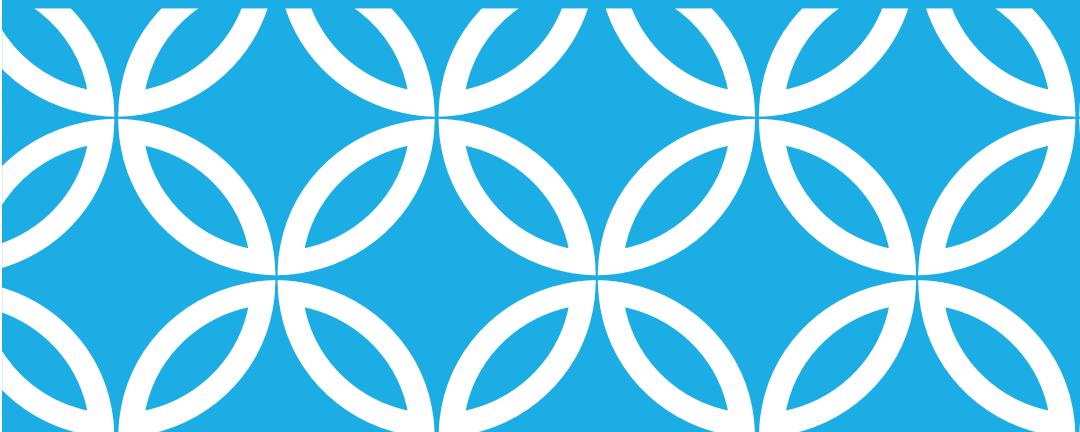
## What is Lent?

Lent is the **six-week period of preparation for Holy Week** (Christ's Passion and Death) and **Easter** (Christ's Resurrection).



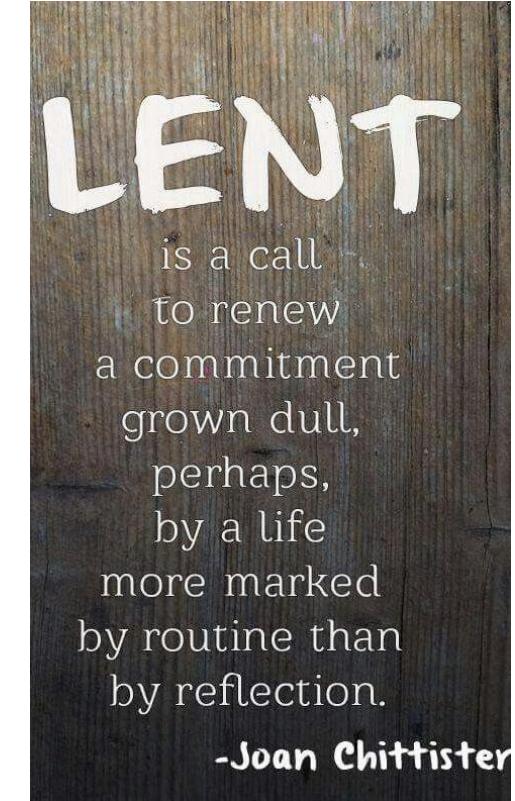
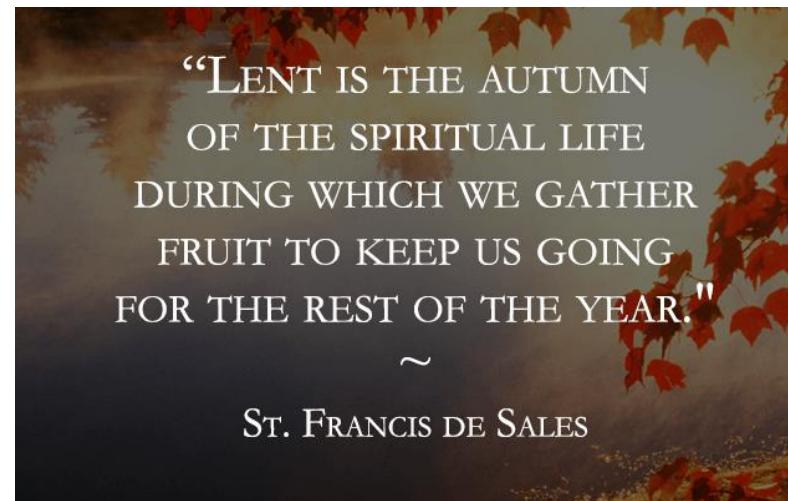
# HOW LONG IS LENT?

Lent is approximately 6 weeks (46 days, or 40 days not counting Sundays) and runs from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday.



Why aren't Sundays "counted" in the 40 days?

Sundays are a celebration of Christ's Resurrection and so they are days of joy rather than penance.





# LENT

a season of repentance,  
prayer and fasting



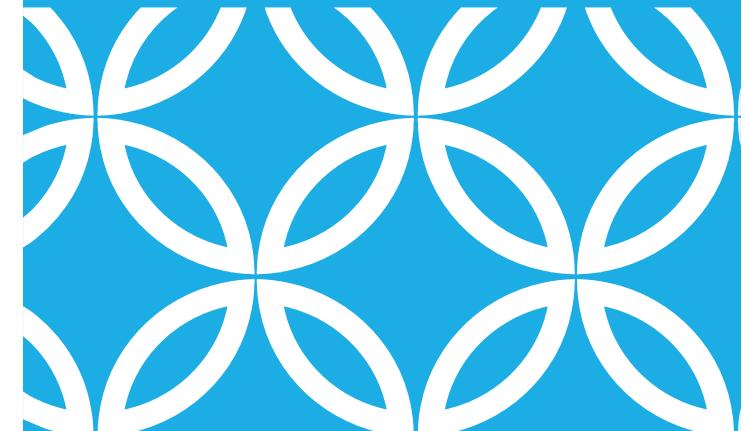
Ash  
Wednesday  
2024  
is  
Wednesday,  
February 14



Being marked with ashes is a public acknowledgement that one is a sinner, as we all are.

## ASH WEDNESDAY

The name “Ash Wednesday” comes from the blessed ashes that are applied to the foreheads of the faithful.



## WHAT IS ASH WEDNESDAY?

Ash Wednesday is the first day of the liturgical season of [Lent](#). It is a day when Catholics go to [mass](#) and in addition to receiving the word of God and the [Eucharist](#), we receive ashes on our foreheads in the shape of a cross.

We receive them as a sign of the beginning of [the season of Lent](#), the season of penance and preparation for Easter.



## Ash Wednesday History

In the fourth century, public penitents dressed in sackcloth and were sprinkled with ashes to show their repentance. The practice of public penance gradually fell into disuse from the eighth to the tenth centuries.

Instead, it was replaced by private confession and private penance. Our current celebration of Ash Wednesday began to develop in the eleventh century. By this time had become customary to receive ashes at the beginning of Lent. The Christian use of ashes is rooted in the Jewish custom of sprinkling ashes on the head as a sign of repentance.

Contrary to popular belief, Ash Wednesday is not a holy day of obligation. It is, however, a spiritually and liturgically significant celebration which sets the penitential tone for the next forty days before Easter.



### Distribution of Ashes

On Ash Wednesday, ashes may be distributed during Mass, usually after the homily, or outside of Mass. When done outside of Mass ashes are distributed as part of a Liturgy of the Word. Ashes are typically placed on one's forehead in the shape of a cross. The traditional formula for placing the ashes on the forehead is, "Remember you are dust and to dust you will return." However, today you may also hear the formula, "Turn away from sin and live the gospel!"

### In the Ash Wednesday Gospel (**Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18**), we hear Jesus say:

*When you fast,  
do not look gloomy like the hypocrites.  
They neglect their appearance,  
so that they may appear to others to be fasting.  
Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward.  
But when you fast,  
anoint your head and wash your face,  
so that you may not appear to be fasting,  
except to your Father who is hidden.  
And your Father who sees what is hidden will repay you.*



## SIGNIFICANCE OF ASHES

The ashes are a symbol of penance and reconciliation. Ashes are used in the Catholic Church not only on Ash Wednesday, but also in the rites for the consecration of an altar and for the dedication of a church. The ashes are the burnt palms used on Passion Sunday/Palm Sunday of the previous year. These palms are burned in the Easter fire, lit on the Saturday night that marks the transition from Holy Saturday to Easter Sunday. Many parishes allow for you to bring back your palms so that they may be used on the next Ash Wednesday.

## WHY WERE WEDNESDAY AND FRIDAYS DEDICATED TO FASTING IN THE CATHOLIC FAITH?

*In the early Church, Wednesdays and Fridays were appointed as days of fasting.*

*Their choice was most appropriate, for Wednesday was then dedicated by the pagans to Mercury, the god of theft and injustice, and Friday was consecrated to Venus, the goddess of carnal love and debauchery; wherefore, fasting on those days was well calculated both to atone for the countless sins of injustice and impurity committed everywhere almost without restraint, and to keep the Christians from indulging in them.*

While that may have been an early reason why those days were chosen, the primary reason **Wednesday became a fasting day was in memory of Judas' betrayal**, who according to tradition betrayed Jesus on a Wednesday.

The Wednesday fast then has a direct link to Jesus' Passion and recalls a sorrowful event in Jesus' life. The fast became a way to atone for this betrayal as well as a **reminder of how often we betray Jesus** through the bad choices we make daily.

While Wednesday is no longer a fasting day throughout the calendar year, a remnant of this tradition is found on Ash Wednesday, when the Church begins its Lenten fast.



# KEEP LENTEN GOALS REALISTIC! REFLECT, EVALUATE, MODIFY, MEASURABLE, REALISTIC



- **The ABC...of Lent**
  - A. Adoration**
  - B. Bible**
  - C. Confession**
  - D. Devotion (Pray, Rosary, Divine Mercy Prayer etc.)**
  - E. Eucharist**
  - F. Faith Sharing (friends to share with)**
  - G. Generosity**
- **The goal is to grow in God**

## WHAT ARE THE “RULES”?

**ABSTAIN**- Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and all Lenten Fridays

Catholics (14 years of age and older) are required to abstain from meat.

**FAST**-Ash Wednesday and Good Friday

Catholics (age 22 – 58) are required to fast. This excludes those who cannot fast for medical reasons including pregnant and nursing mothers.

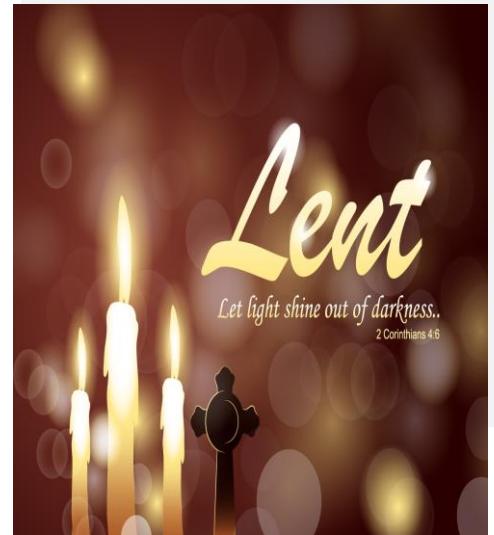
### What does it mean to “abstain”?

Abstain means to fast from all meat from land animals (cows, sheep, chickens, etc.) and birds.

Fish and shellfish are permitted.

### Is “Lent” Biblical?

While the term “Lent” is not found in the Bible, our 40 days reflect the 40-day preparation of Jesus in the desert before his public ministry.



### What constitutes a Lenten fast?

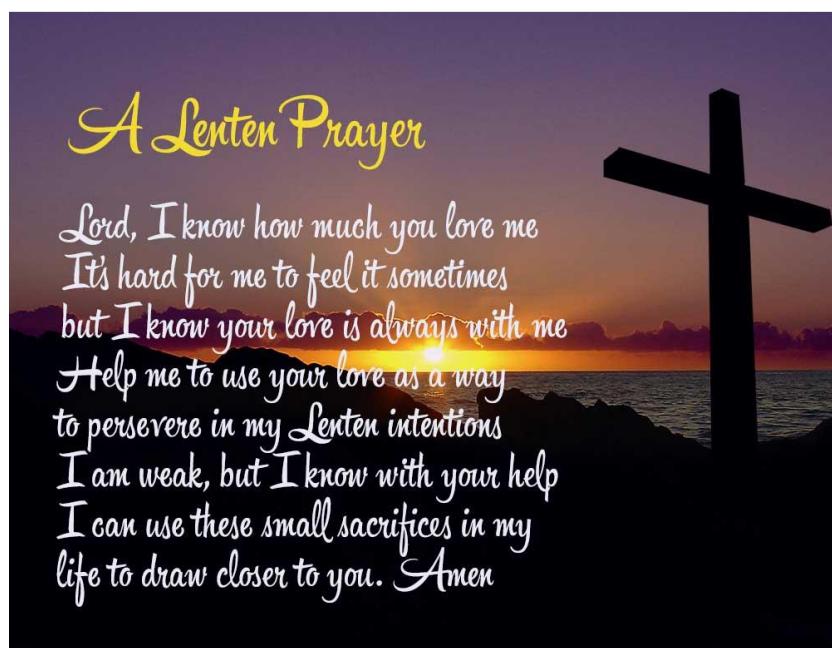
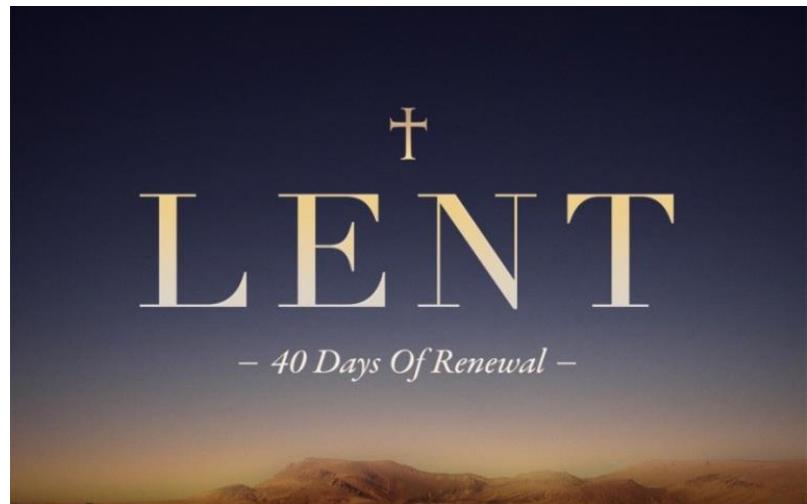
To fast means to limit food to one full meatless meal and other food taken during the day to less than one full meal when combined.

## LENTEN REGULATIONS

The Catholic Church, to help Catholics do at least a minimum during Lent, asks all Catholics to **fast and abstain** from meat on certain days.

Fasting means to limit food to one full meal a day with the possibility of two smaller meals (not adding up to a full meal) as needed.

Abstinence means not eating meat, although fish is allowed. Catholics are required to observe all days of fasting and abstinence which is one of **the precepts of the Church**.

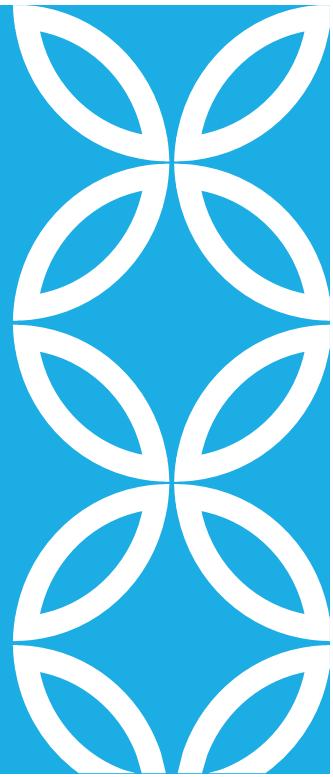


**A list of 16 possible foods to give up for Lent (not all, chose 1)**

- Chocolate
- Candy
- Desserts
- Coffee
- coffee creamer
- Pop
- Alcohol
- Tea
- drink only water
- Red meat
- all meat (go vegetarian!)
- Animal products (go vegan!)
- Condiments
- Snacking
- take out
- take up intermittent fasting

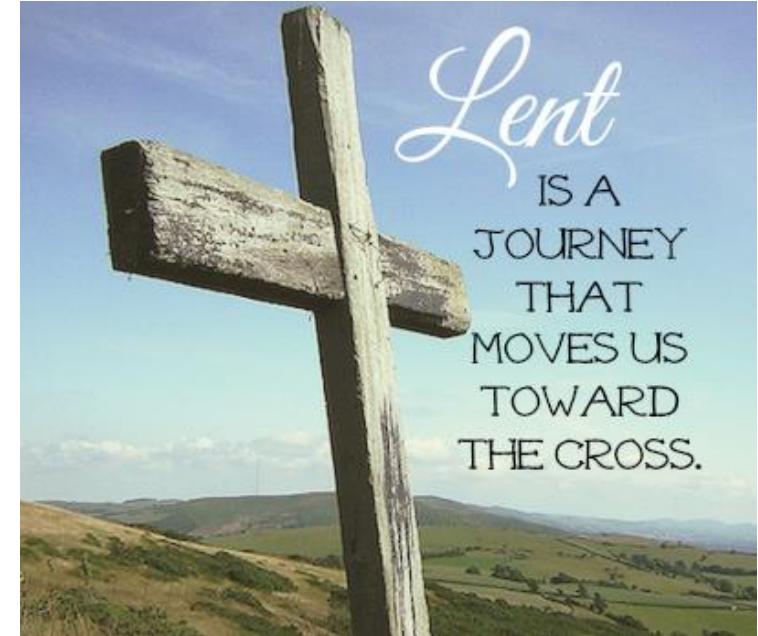
## 7 Activities to give up

- Social media
- watching YouTube/Netflix/TV
- games on your devices
- listening to the radio
- Pinterest
- unnecessary shopping or shopping at a specific store (Walmart, Costco?)
- secular music



## 10 Habits to sacrifice for Lent

- Swearing
- Sleeping in
- Comparison
- Complaining
- Gossiping or listening to gossip
- Negativity
- Overeating
- Checking your phone
- Skipping schedule exercise
- Arguing



## 9 Things to ADD as a Lenten sacrificial practice

Don't forget that we can also add in spiritual practices or other activities as a Lenten sacrificial practice.

- listen to religious music only
- decluttering (40 bags in 40 days?)
- donate your time
- donate gently used items
- daily Mass
- daily Rosary
- weekly adoration
- confession
- exercising



## 7 Luxuries as a Lent sacrifice

- hot showers/baths
- wearing makeup
- turn the heat down
- checking your reflection
- choice of clothing (limit to several outfits)
- headphones
- buying new clothes

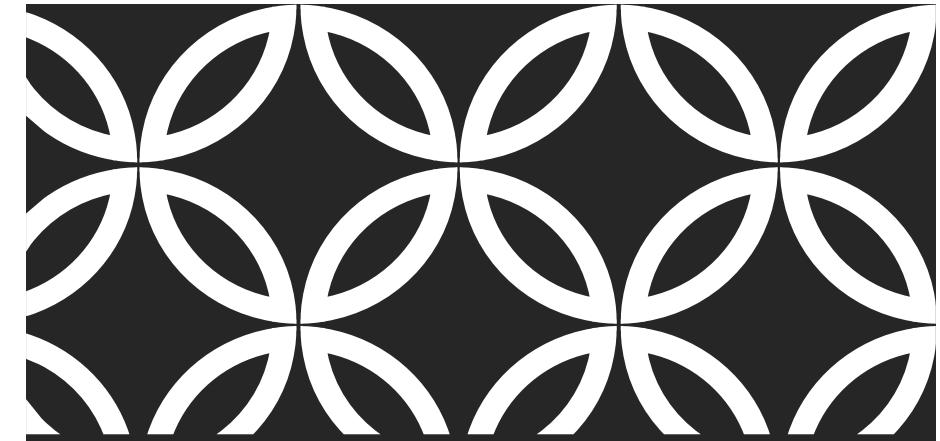
### **Commonly Asked Question:**

Every year during Lent I'm asked why Catholics fast and abstain. How can I explain our Lenten practice?

### **Answer:**

[Lent](#) is the 40 days before Easter in which Catholics pray, fast, contemplate, and engage in acts of spiritual self-discipline. Catholics do these things because Easter, which celebrates the Resurrection of Christ, is the greatest holy day of the Christian year (even above Christmas) and Catholics have recognized that it is appropriate to prepare for such a holy day by engaging in such disciplines.

## **WHY DO CATHOLICS PRACTICE FASTING AND ABSTINENCE DURING LENT?**

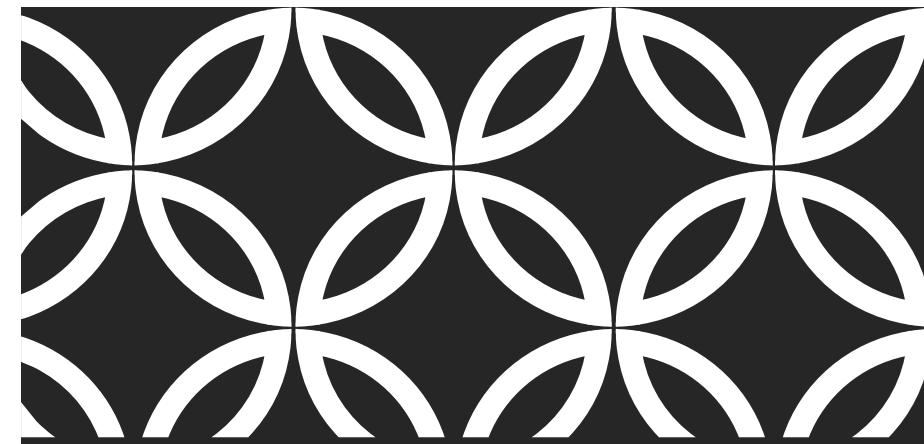


(Archbishop Fulton Sheen noted that the Protestant attitude is summarized by the line, "First comes the feast, then comes the hangover," while the Catholic attitude is "First comes the fast, then comes the feast.")

The reason Lent lasts 40 days is that 40 is the traditional number of judgment and spiritual testing in the Bible (Gn 7:4, Ex 24:18, 34:28, Nm 13:25, 14:33, Jon 3:4). Lent bears particular relationship to the 40 days Christ spent fasting in the desert before entering into his public ministry (Mt 4:1-11). Catholics imitate Christ by spending 40 days in spiritual discipline before the celebration of Christ's triumph over sin and death.



THERE ARE ALSO MANY BIBLICAL REFERENCES TO LENTEN THEMES LIKE REPENTANCE, FASTING, SELF SACRIFICE, AND ALMSGIVING.



**Is Ash Wednesday a holyday of obligation for Catholics?**

**Nope.** But participation is encouraged.

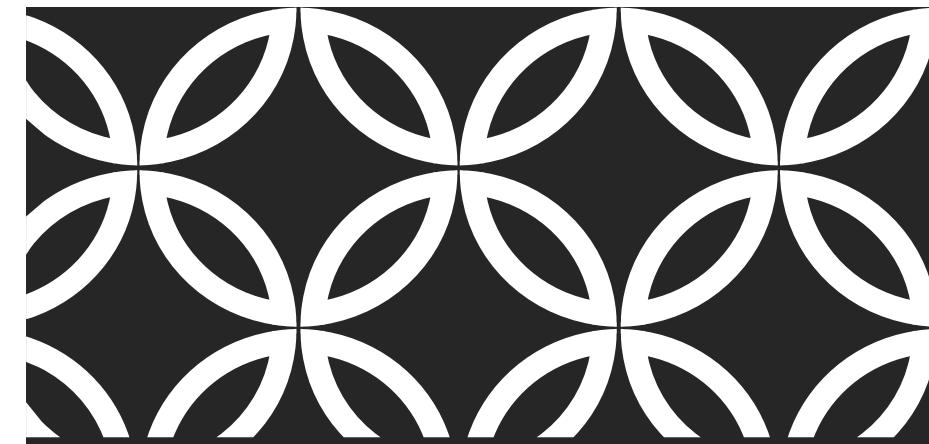


## WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF ALMSGIVING?

The Catholic Church considers almsgiving "a witness to fraternal charity" and "a work of justice pleasing to God" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 2462).

Almsgiving is the act of donating money or goods to the poor or performing other acts of charity. However, when defining almsgiving, it helps to understand the meaning behind the word itself.

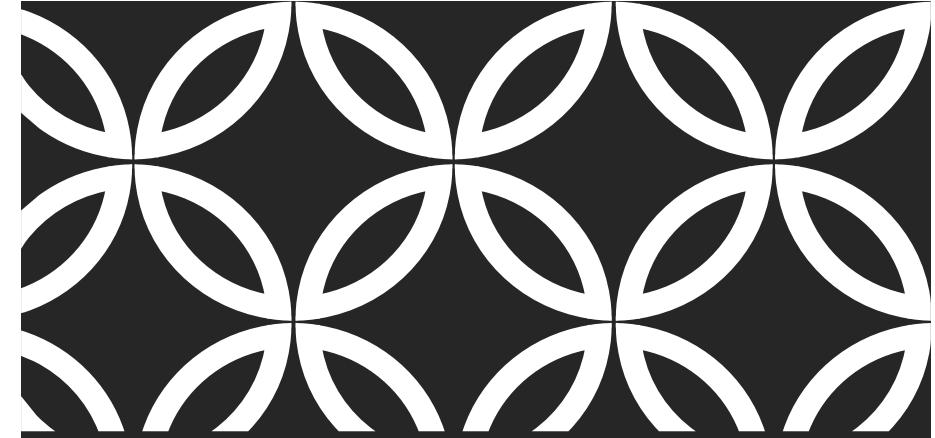
The roots of the word "alms" can be found in ancient Latin and Greek words meaning mercy and pity. Similarly, the root of the word "charity" comes from the Latin "caritas," meaning love.





#### **ACTS OF ALMSGIVING DURING LENT ALLOW US TO:**

- LET GO OF OUR OWN DESIRES AND FOCUS ON THE NEEDS OF THE LESS FORTUNATE
- SACRIFICE OUR TEMPORAL COMFORT FOR THE GOOD OF ANOTHER PERSON
- RELY ON GOD TO MEET OUR NEEDS RATHER THAN PROVIDING FOR OURSELVES



#### **Recap:**

##### **Why do Catholics observe it?**

**Lent is a time of penance and preparation for Easter mimicking Jesus's withdrawal and sacrifice into the desert before His public ministry.**

**It is a time to more fully realize our need for a savior so we can more fully enter the joy of Easter.**

# PRAYERS

*Chaplet  
of the  
Precious Blood*



*The Chaplet of Divine Mercy*

## The Stations of the Cross



**The First Station**  
Jesus is Condemned to Death



**The Second Station**  
Jesus Carries His Cross



**The Third Station**  
Jesus Falls the First Time



**The Fourth Station**  
Jesus Meets His Sorrowful Mother



**The Fifth Station**  
Simon Helps Jesus to  
Carry the Cross



**The Sixth Station**  
Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus



**The Seventh Station**  
Jesus Falls the Second Time



**The Eighth Station**  
The Women of Jerusalem  
Weep over Jesus



**The Ninth Station**  
Jesus Falls the Third Time



**The Tenth Station**  
Jesus is Stripped of His  
Garments



**The Eleventh Station**  
Jesus is Nailed to the Cross



**The Twelfth Station**  
Jesus is Raised upon the  
Cross, and Dies



**The Thirteenth Station**  
Jesus is Taken Down  
from the Cross



**The Fourteenth Station**  
Jesus is Laid in  
the Sepulcher

# THE ROSARY

## Introductory Prayers

1. Make the Sign of the Cross and say the "Apostles Creed."
2. Say the "Our Father" (for the intentions of the Holy Father.)
3. Say three "Hail Marys" (for an increase in the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity.)
4. Say the "Glory Be to the Father."

## For each Decade of the Rosary

5. Announce the first Mystery; then, say the "Our Father."
6. Say ten "Hail Marys."
7. Say the "Glory Be to the Father."
8. Say the "Fatima Prayer."
9. Announce the Second Mystery; then, say the "Our Father."
10. Repeat 6 through 8 for the remaining mysteries.

## Concluding Prayers

11. Say the "Hail Holy Queen" with the concluding prayer.



Monday – The Joyful Mysteries

Thursday – The Luminous Mysteries

Tuesday & Friday – The Sorrowful Mysteries

Wednesday, Saturday & Sunday – The Glorious Mysteries

## The Joyful Mysteries

- 1st – The Annunciation
- 2nd – The Visitation
- 3rd – The Nativity
- 4th – The Presentation
- 5th – The Finding in the Temple

## The Luminous Mysteries

- 1st – The Baptism in the Jordan
- 2nd – The Wedding at Cana
- 3rd – The Proclamation of the Kingdom and the Call to Conversion
- 4th – The Transfiguration
- 5th – The Institution of the Holy Eucharist

## Sorrowful Mysteries

- 1st – The Agony in the Garden
- 2nd – The Scourging at the Pillar
- 3rd – The Crowning with Thorns
- 4th – The Carrying of the Cross
- 5th – The Crucifixion

## The Glorious Mysteries

- 1st – The Resurrection
- 2nd – The Ascension
- 3rd – The Descent of the Holy Spirit
- 4th – The Assumption of Mary
- 5th – The Crowning of Mary as Queen of Heaven



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## VENI, SANCTE SPIRITUS (COME, HOLY SPIRIT)



Come, Holy Spirit,  
send down those beams,  
which sweetly flow in silent streams from Thy bright throne above.

O come, Thou Father of the poor;  
O come, Thou source of all our store, come, fill our hearts with love.

O Thou, of comforters the best,  
O Thou, the soul's delightful guest, the pilgrim's sweet relief.

Rest art Thou in our toil, most sweet refreshment in the noonday  
heat; and solace in our grief.  
O blessed Light of life Thou art; fill with Thy light the inmost heart of  
those who hope in Thee.

Without Thy Godhead nothing can, have any price or worth in man,  
nothing can harmless be.  
Lord, wash our sinful stains away, refresh from heaven our barren  
clay, our wounds and bruises heal.  
To Thy sweet yoke our stiff necks bow, warm with Thy fire our hearts  
of snow, our wandering feet recall.  
Grant to Thy faithful, dearest Lord, whose only hope is Thy sure word,  
the sevenfold gifts of grace.  
Grant us in life Thy grace that we, in peace may die and ever be,  
in joy before Thy face.

Amen. Alleluia.