

Keeping a Holy Lent

A Lenten Devotional for 2023

Introduction

What is Lent?

Lent is a 40 day period of penitence, fasting, and prayer in preparation for the great feast of the Resurrection. The season began in the early days of the Church as a time of preparation for those seeking to be baptized at the Easter Vigil. The forty days refer to our Lord's time of fasting in the wilderness; and since Sundays are never fast days, Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Lenten fast.

Why do we use ashes at the beginning of Lent?

Throughout the Old Testament ashes are used as a sign of sorrow and repentance. Christians have traditionally used ashes to indicate sorrow for our own sins and as a reminder that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). Like Adam and Eve, we have disobeyed and rebelled against God, and are under the same judgment: "You are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19).

But as we are marked with ashes in the same manner that we were signed with the Cross in Baptism, we are also reminded of the life we share in Jesus Christ, the second Adam (Romans 5:17; 6:4). It is in this sure hope that we begin the journey of these forty days, that by hearing and answering our Savior's call to repent, we may enter fully into the joyful celebration of His Resurrection.

How do we practice Lent?

We seek to keep a Holy Lent through practices of self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and almsgiving; and by reading and meditating on God's Holy Word. All these practices are to be carried out in faith that God's love and mercy are freely given to us in Jesus Christ. Our efforts must be pursued in the grace and power of the Holy Spirit if they are to draw us deeper into His love.

This devotional is provided to guide you in Lenten practices of prayer, fasting, almsgiving and meditating on Scripture. Adapt these practices as needed to fit your household. *(Adapted from the Book of Common Prayer, 2019.)*

Special Services during the Lenten Season:

Ash Wednesday

February 22 | 6:30 p.m. | Redeemer Classical School

Maundy Thursday

April 6 | 6:30 p.m. | Redeemer Classical School

Good Friday

April 7 | 6:30 p.m. | Redeemer Classical School

Easter Vigil

April 8 | 8 p.m. | The Barn at 362 Indian Trail Road

Easter Sunday

April 9 | 10 a.m. | The Barn at 362 Indian Trail Road

A Short Guide to Fasting

“And when you fast...”

Matthew 6:16

What is Fasting?

Fasting is praying with our bodies. We are not earning something. We are not attempting to control God or his action in our lives. God’s grace is poured on us in Jesus. Fasting inclines us toward his gracious transformation by the Holy Spirit.

Why Do We Fast in Lent?

We fast in order to feast, to feast on God and the riches he gives. Lent is a season of fasting in preparation for Easter, the season of feasting on Christ’s Resurrection joy.

Ways of Fasting

Full Fasts

A full fast begins after dinner one evening and continues through lunch the following day. The fast is broken with the next evening meal. Liquids are encouraged during a fast.

The following days in Lent are full fasts:

Ash Wednesday

“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” We begin Lent in fasting to remember our mortality and our dependence on God for eternal life.

Fridays

Early Christians set aside each Friday as a mini Lent. Their reason was to prayerfully reflect on Jesus’ sacrificial suffering for us on the cross. This Lent we encourage you to set aside Fridays in the same way.

The Triduum

We fast from the night of Maundy Thursday (when Jesus is arrested) to Easter Vigil.

Partial Fasts

A partial fast is a fast from one meal a day and/or from celebratory food and drink such as dessert or alcohol. All the above fasts can be adapted to a partial fast.

Throughout the Lenten season choose to fast from something meaningful to you: alcohol, coffee, sweets, etc.

Feast Days

Christians fast in order to feast! Sundays are reserved for joyful celebration of Christ’s Resurrection, so we cease fasting on this day.

Who Should Fast?

Full fasts are for those 14 and older whose health allows for extended periods without food.

Families with young children and those who cannot practice full fasts for health reasons can simplify their meals or eat small meals during a full fast.

*So much of life
is out of balance today.
Too much, too little,
too caught up in the whirlwind.
The world insists we need
more, more, more, more,
pushing us to grab all we can.
But wait. Slow down. Stop.
There is another way,
a better way, the only way.
Only by emptying ourselves out
before God will we find
fullness within ourselves.*

Mary DeTurris Poust, *Cravings*

A Short Guide to Almsgiving

“When you give to the needy...”
Matthew 6:2

What is Almsgiving?

Almsgiving is a fast from excess. We sacrifice financially so that we learn to live by God alone. Put positively, almsgiving is an act of love for God and others. Like fasting, almsgiving is not an effort to earn something from God. Almsgiving inclines us toward his gracious transformation by the Holy Spirit.

Ways to Give Alms This Lent

Do you know someone in our church or in your broader relational context who is in need? Find a way to bless brothers, sisters, neighbors, or friends through your time or resources.

Church of the Lamb’s Rector’s Discretionary Fund: This is the way we seek to help those in our church and community with financial needs such as electric bills or payments for counseling.

Consider supporting an organization that seeks to do good in our community:

- Bridge of Hope

Supporting homeless families in our area

- AVACare and EastGate Ministries

Crisis pregnancy support centers

- Way to Go

Helping low-income working families with transportation

The works of mercy are innumerable. Their very variety brings this advantage to those who are true Christians, that in the matter of almsgiving not only the rich and affluent but also those of average means and the poor are able to play their part. Those who are unequal in their capacity to give can be equal in the love within their hearts.

St. Leo the Great

Scripture from the Daily Office Lectionary

Week 1

Wednesday | February 22

Psalm 122, 123

Exodus 1

Matthew 9:1–17

Thursday | February 23

Psalm 127, 128

Exodus 2

Matthew 9:18–34

Friday | February 24

Psalm 132, 133

Exodus 3

Matthew 9:35 – 10:23

Saturday | February 25

Psalm 136

Exodus 4

Matthew 10:24–end

Week 2

Sunday | February 26
Psalm 139
Exodus 5
Matthew 11

Monday | February 27
Psalm 140
Exodus 6
Matthew 12:1–21

Tuesday | February 28
Psalm 144
Exodus 7
Matthew 12:22–end

Wednesday | March 1
Psalm 146
Exodus 8
Matthew 13:1–23

Thursday | March 2
Psalm 148
Exodus 9
Matthew 13:24–43

Friday | March 3
Psalm 1, 2
Exodus 10
Matthew 13:44–end

Saturday | March 4
Psalm 5, 6
Exodus 11
Matthew 14



Week 3

Sunday | March 5
Psalm 9
Exodus 12
Matthew 15:1–28

Monday | March 6
Psalm 8, 11
Exodus 13
Matthew 15:29–16:12

Tuesday | March 7
Psalm 12, 13, 14
Exodus 14
Matthew 16:13–end

Wednesday | March 8
Psalm 18
Exodus 15
Matthew 17:1–23

Thursday | March 9
Psalm 19
Exodus 16
Matthew 17:24–18:14

Friday | March 10
Psalm 22
Exodus 17
Matthew 18:15–end

Saturday | March 11
Psalm 25
Exodus 18
Matthew 19:1–15

Week 4

Sunday | March 12
Psalm 26, 28
Exodus 19
Matthew 19:16–20:16

Monday | March 13
Psalm 29, 30
Exodus 20
Matthew 20:17–end

Tuesday | March 14
Psalm 34
Exodus 21
Matthew 21:1–22

Wednesday | March 15
Psalm 32, 36
Exodus 22
Matthew 21:23–end

Thursday | March 16
Psalm 37
Exodus 23
Matthew 22:1–33

Friday | March 17
Psalm 40
Exodus 24
Matthew 22:34–23:12

Saturday | March 18
Psalm 42, 43
Exodus 25
Matthew 23:13–end



Week 5

Sunday | March 19
Psalm 45
Exodus 26
Matthew 24:1–18

Monday | March 20
Psalm 47, 48
Exodus 27
Matthew 24:29–end

Tuesday | March 21
Psalm 50
Exodus 28
Matthew 25:1–30

Wednesday | March 22
Psalm 52, 53, 54
Exodus 29
Matthew 25:31–end

Thursday | March 23
Psalm 56, 57
Exodus 30
Matthew 26:1–30

Friday | March 24
Psalm 59
Exodus 31
Matthew 26:31–56

Saturday | March 25
Feast of the Annunciation
Psalm 113, 138
Exodus 32
Luke 1:26–38

Week 6

Sunday | March 26
Psalm 61, 62
Exodus 33
Matthew 26:57–end

Monday | March 27
Psalm 68
Exodus 34
Matthew 27:1–26

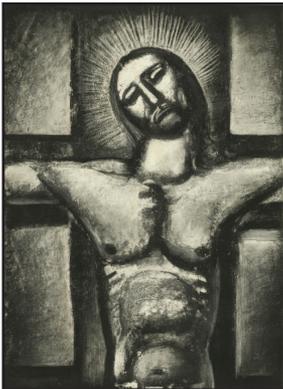
Tuesday | March 28
Psalm 69
Exodus 35
Matthew 27:27–56

Wednesday | March 29
Psalm 66
Exodus 36
Matthew 27:57–28 end

Thursday | March 30
Psalm 71
Exodus 37
Mark 1:1–13

Friday | March 31
Psalm 74
Exodus 38
Mark 1:14–31

Saturday | April 1
Psalm 75, 76
Exodus 39
Mark 1:32–end



Holy Week

Palm Sunday | April 2
Psalm 78:1–39
Exodus 40
Mark 2:1–22

Holy Monday | April 3
Psalm 78:40–72
Leviticus 1
Mark 2:23–3:12

Holy Tuesday | April 4
Psalm 81
Leviticus 8
Mark 3:13–end

Holy Wednesday | April 5
Psalm 84
Leviticus 10
Mark 4:1–34

Maundy Thursday | April 6
Psalm 41
Daniel 9
John 13:1–20

Good Friday | April 7
Psalm 40
Lamentations 3:1–36
Luke 23:18–49

Holy Saturday | April 8
Psalm 88
Lamentations 3:37–58
Luke 23:50–56

Easter Sunday! | April 9
Psalm 118
Exodus 15
Acts 2:22–32

Morning

O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth your praise. *Psalm 51:15*

*Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your holy Spirit from me.
O give me the comfort of your help again,
and sustain me with your willing Spirit.* *Psalm 51:10–12*

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

You may use the Daily Office Lectionary readings listed on the previous pages.

A period of silence may follow. Prayers may be offered for ourselves and others.

The Lord's Prayer

*Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.*

The Collect

O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, you have brought us safely to the beginning of this day: Defend us by your mighty power, that we may not fall into sin nor run into any danger; and that, guided by your Spirit, we may do what is righteous in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Midday

Blessed be the god and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. *Ephesians 1:3*

Psalm 113:1-4

*Praise the LORD. Sing praises, you servants of the LORD;
O praise the Name of the LORD.
Blessed be the Name of the LORD,
from this time forth for evermore.
The LORD's Name be praised
from the rising up of the sun to the going down of the same.
The LORD is high above all nations,
and his glory above the heavens.*

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

A Reading from Holy Scripture

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. *John 15:4-5*

or

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6-7

A period of silence may follow.

Prayers may be offered for ourselves and others.

The Lord's Prayer

The Collect

Blessed Savior, at this hour you hung upon the Cross, stretching out your loving arms: Grant that all the peoples of the earth may look to you and be saved; for your tender mercies' sake. *Amen.*

At the Close of Day

I will lay me down in peace, and take my rest; for you, LORD, only, make me dwell in safety. *Psalms 4:8*

Psalm 134

*Behold now, praise the LORD, all you servants of the LORD,
You that stand by night in the house of the LORD,
even in the courts of the house of our God.
Lift up your hands in the sanctuary
and sing praises unto the LORD.
The LORD who made heaven and earth
give you blessing out of Zion.*

A Reading from Holy Scripture

You keep them in perfect peace whose minds are stayed on you, because they trust in you. Trust in the Lord for ever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock. *Isaiah 26:5-4*

or

Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 5:25

A period of silence may follow.

Prayers may be offered for ourselves and others. It is appropriate that prayers of thanksgiving for the blessings of the day, and penitence for our sins, be included.

The Lord's Prayer

The Collect

Visit this place, O Lord, and drive far from it all snares of the enemy; let your holy angels dwell with us to preserve us in peace; and let your blessing be upon us always; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Nunc Dimittis (The Song of Simeon)

*Lord, now let your servant depart in peace, according to your word.
For my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you have prepared before the face of all people;
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles,
and to be the glory of your people Israel.* *Luke 2:29-32*

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

Concluding Sentence

The almighty and merciful Lord, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless us and keep us, this night and evermore. **Amen.**

Artwork

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