



The Season of Lent

**"The annual Lenten season is the fitting time to climb the holy mountain of Easter."
[6, On Preparing and Celebrating the Paschal Feast]**

A Description of Lent from the General Norms of the Liturgical Year and Calendar

27. Lent is a preparation for the celebration of Easter. For the Lenten liturgy disposes both catechumens and the faithful to celebrate the paschal mystery: catechumens, through the several stages of Christian initiation; the faithful, through reminders of their own baptism and through penitential practices.

28. Lent runs from Ash Wednesday until the Mass of the Lord's Supper exclusive. The Alleluia is not used from the beginning of Lent until the Easter Vigil.

29. On Ash Wednesday, a universal day of fast, ashes are distributed.

30. The Sundays of this season are called the First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent. The Sixth Sunday, which marks the beginning of Holy Week, is called Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday).

31. Holy Week has as its purpose the remembrance of Christ's passion, beginning with his Messianic entrance into Jerusalem. [General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar]

Faith Formation for the Season of Lent

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday February 14, 2024. Below are topics of interest for the Lenten Season.

1. Ash Wednesday
 - The Meaning and purpose of Ash Wednesday
 - The Origin of Ash Wednesday and the Use of Ashes
 - Where Do we Get the Ashes for Ash Wednesday?
2. The Season of Lent – Video – Lent in Three Minutes
 - Lent and the Liturgical Calendar
 - 2024 Lenten Calendar:
3. Fasting and Abstinence – Regulations
 - Lenten Environment in the Church
 - Questions About Fasting and Abstinence
4. What is the Meaning of Lent
5. Great Things You Can Do For Lent
 - Liturgical Prayer and Our Conversion Journey
 - Penitential Practices and Our Conversion Journey
 - I Need Help! Penitential Practices I Can Do For Lent
6. Lent Food - Recipes for Lent

Ash Wednesday – February 14, 2024



"On the Wednesday before the first Sunday of Lent, the faithful receive the ashes, thus entering into the time established for the purification of their souls. This sign of penance, a traditionally biblical one, has been preserved among the Church's customs until the present day.

It signifies the human condition of the sinner, who seeks to express his guilt before the Lord in an exterior manner, and by so doing express his interior conversion, led on by the confident hope that the Lord will be merciful. This same sign marks the beginning of the way of conversion, which is developed through the celebration of the sacraments of penance during the days before Easter."

The blessing and imposition of ashes should take place either in the Mass or outside of the Mass. In the latter case, it is to be part of a liturgy of the word and conclude with the prayer of the faithful. Ash Wednesday is to be observed as a day of penance in the whole Church, one of both abstinence and fasting." [On Preparing and Celebrating the Paschal Feasts]

Ash Wednesday is NOT a holy day of obligation. It is a very popular ritual and sometimes people will go to great length to receive the ashes and forgo communion!

THE ORIGIN OF ASH WEDNESDAY AND THE USE OF ASHES.

Ashes were used in rituals in the Old Testament. They symbolized penance, mortality and mourning. We see them mentioned in the Book of Ester, Job, and Daniel to name a few examples. Jesus also made reference to ashes when he spoke to the people about repenting of sin. "For if the mighty deeds done in your midst had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would long ago have repented in sackcloth and ashes."

In the early Church the church fathers often made reference to the use of ashes as a sign of penance. Those doing public penance often were clothed in sackcloth and ashes. In some instances the bishop would sprinkled the ashes on the head of the penitent.

In the early middle ages it was the custom in some places to lay the dying person on the ground on top of sackcloth sprinkled with ashes. The person was then blessed with holy water with the familiar saying: "Remember that thou art dust and to dust thou shalt return."

In the course of time the use of ashes started to mark the beginning of the Lenten Season. There is a ritual for the "Day of Ashes" found in the Gregorian Sacramentary [around the 8th century]. The ashes were a symbol of the need for repentance as one began the Lenten journey. Ashes were sprinkled on the head as a reminder to repent of sin during the season of Lent.

WHERE DO WE GET THE ASHES FOR ASH WEDNESDAY?

The ashes that are blessed and distributed on Ash Wednesday are made from burning the palms that were blessed on the previous Palm Sunday. The Roman Missal states they may also be made from the olive branches or branches of other trees that were blessed the previous year." They symbolize the fleetingness of our earthly status. They remind us that through our baptism we were buried with Christ and rise with him to live for God. As Fr. Thomas Merton once said the ashes "are not a sign of death, but a promise of life." The ashes are considered a sacramental.

THE SEASON OF LENT

For a quick overview of the Lenten Season click on “Lent In Three Minutes” by Busted Halo.



Lent in Three Minutes <https://bustedhalo.com/video/watch-lent-3-minutes>



LENT AND THE LITURGICAL CALENDAR

- ✚ Lent begins with Ash Wednesday [February 14, 2024] and ends on Holy Thursday [March 28, 2024].
- ✚ The Sundays of Lent include the First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent. The Sixth Sunday, which marks the beginning of Holy Week, is called Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday-March 24, 2024).
- ✚ The Triduum [3 days] begins on Holy Thursday [March 28, 2024] and ends with Evening Prayer on Easter Sunday [March 31, 2024]. The Triduum has 3 main liturgical actions that are celebrated as one main liturgical celebration. They are: Mass of the Lord’s Supper [Holy Thursday evening], Celebration of the Lord’s Passion [Good Friday], Easter Vigil/Sunday

2024 LENTEN CALENDAR: REFLECT. REPENT. RESTORE.



The United States Conferences of Catholic Bishops [USCCB] provides a Lenten Calendar with daily inspirations and reflections for your Lenten Journey. “Fortify your Lenten journey with the words of the church fathers and Pope Francis featured on this calendar, and contemplate the suggestions for prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Print the calendar in English and Spanish and post it in a prominent place to remind you of your commitment to raise up, sacrifice, and offer, during this Lent.” [Available in English and Spanish]

Click or paste here: https://www.usccb.org/resources/Lent-2024-calendar_English.pdf



Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are obligatory days of fasting and abstinence for Catholics. In addition, Fridays during Lent are obligatory days of abstinence.

For members of the Latin Catholic Church, the norms on fasting are obligatory from age 18 until age 59. When fasting, a person is permitted to eat one full meal, as well as two smaller meals that together are not equal to a full meal. The norms concerning abstinence from meat are binding upon members of the Latin Catholic Church from age 14 onwards.

Members of the Eastern Catholic Churches are to observe the particular law of their own *sui iuris* Church.

[A Reflection on Lenten Fasting](#)

If possible, the fast on Good Friday is continued until the Easter Vigil (on Holy Saturday night) as the "paschal fast" to honor the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus and to prepare ourselves to share more fully and to celebrate more readily his Resurrection.

LENTEN ENVIRONMENT IN THE CHURCH

The Spirit of "fasting" permeates the entire Lenten Season. The Church directs that the environment in the Church should also reflect this fasting spirit.

"In Lent, the altar should not be decorated with flowers, and musical instruments may be played only to give necessary support to the singing." This is in order that the penitential character of the season be preserved. Likewise, from the beginning of Lent until the Paschal Vigil, "Alleluia" is to be omitted in all celebrations, even on solemnities and feasts. The chants to be sung in celebrations, especially of the Eucharist, and also at devotional exercises should be in harmony with the spirit of the season and the liturgical texts." [On Preparing and Celebrating the Paschal Feasts].



QUESTIONS ABOUT FASTING AND ABSTINENCE

Do you want to know why Catholics practice fasting and abstinence? Is the practice of fasting and abstinence found in Scripture? What about the history of fasting and abstinence in the Catholic Church? If so, click the web site below or cut and paste it

into your browser:

From "Simply Catholic" Fasting and abstinence: More than laws of the Church by D.D. Emmons.

<https://simplycatholic.com/fasting-and-abstinence-more-than-laws-of-the-church/>

What is the Meaning of Lent?

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF LENT?

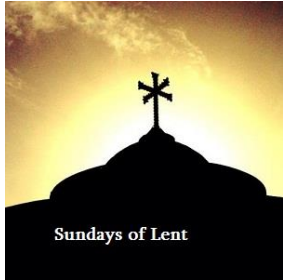
The Church clearly states that Lent has a TWOFOLD PURPOSE. First of all, it is a special time for those who are not baptized [CATECHUMENS] to prepare for their baptism at the Easter Vigil. Although they have been preparing for initiation for at least one full year, the period of Lent is a special time of intense preparation for them that is marked with special rites and formation.



The second purpose of Lent is to provide a period of time for those of us who are already baptized to prepare for the renewal of our baptismal promises on Easter. The baptized are encouraged to pray for the catechumens during their preparation for baptism. For those already baptized, Lent is a special time for them to reflect on their faith journey. The church states that *"Pastors should draw the attention of the faithful to those moments of significant importance in their spiritual life, which are nourished by their baptismal profession of faith, and which they will be invited to renew in the Easter Vigil - "the fullness of the Lenten observance."* [On Preparing and Celebrating the Paschal Feasts, 8].

GREAT THINGS YOU CAN DO FOR LENT!

LITURGICAL PRAYER – THE IMPORTANCE OF SCRIPTURE AND OUR CONVERSION JOURNEY



The Sunday celebrations of the Eucharist offer a special opportunity for the faithful to ponder and reflect on the meaning of the PASCHAL MYSTERY in their lives. Even in this time of Covid, when some of us cannot be present at Mass, the readings for the Sunday celebration are the basis for understanding the diverse aspects of baptism and the other sacraments.

The Church directs that:

“The catechesis on the paschal mystery and the sacraments should be given a special place in the Sunday homilies. The text of the Lectionary should be carefully explained, particularly the passages of the Gospel that illustrate the diverse aspects of baptism and the other sacraments and the mercy of God.” [On Preparing and Celebrating the Paschal Feast, 12].

Need help creating a family prayer experience? Go to “Sunday Connection” by Loyola Press provides reflection, explanation, and activities for every Sunday in Lent. Click on [or cut and paste] this link:

<https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/liturgical-year/sunday-connection/ash-wednesday-preparing-your-group-to-start-lent/>

Sunday connection provides the following information for Ash Wednesday and each Sunday of Lent:

Connection to the Sunday Readings

1. Background on the Gospel Reading
2. Activities and Background for:
 - a. Grades 1-3
 - b. Grades 4-6
 - c. Grades 7-8
 - d. Family

PENITENTIAL PRACTICES AND OUR CONVERSION JOURNEY



The Church teaches that Lent is a special time that is devoted to **PENITENTIAL PRACTICES**. The church directs that the penitential nature of Lent should be emphasized.

14. "The Lenten season should retain something of its penitential character."
[15] "As regards catechesis, it is important to impress on the minds of the faithful not only the social consequences of sin but also that aspect of the virtue of penance, which involves the detestation of sin as an offence against God."
[On Preparing and Celebrating the Paschal Feasts]

I need help! What are some penitential practices that I can do for Lent?

1. **TRY A NEW FORM OF PRAYER.** For example: The Church urges all people to pray the Liturgy of the Hours. This prayer is not just for priests or religious, but for all the faithful. You can pray this on line at: <http://universalis.com/>. There are also many apps for your phone.
2. **EMBRACE THE NUMBER 40.** Try doing 40 acts of kindness. Make 40 phone calls to people who are important to you. Take 40 items to food banks or collection centers for the poor – even our St. Vincent De Paul center.
3. **READ THE ENTIRE GOSPEL OF MARK.** The Gospel of Mark is the gospel we are listening to at Mass this year.
4. **UNPLUG** your phone or TV set for 40 minutes each day.
5. **TAKE A PICTURE** that captures the meaning of Lent each day and post it on Facebook.
6. **DEEPEN YOUR FAITH.** Use the season of Lent to evolve in your adult understanding of sin. For example: What do you know about Social Sin? Have you ever confessed this in the confessional? The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states that we commit social sin when:
"we have a responsibility for the sins committed by others when we cooperate in them. This includes participating directly and voluntarily in them; by ordering, advising, or approving them; by not disclosing or not hindering them when we have an obligation to do so; by protecting evil doers" (CCC, 1868).



The Social Teachings are the Church are found here. <https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/seven-themes-of-catholic-social-teaching>

7. ALMSGIVING

The foundational call of Christians to charity is a frequent theme of the Gospels. During Lent, we are asked to focus more intently on "almsgiving," which means donating money or goods to the poor and performing other acts of charity. As one of the three pillars of Lenten practice, almsgiving is "a witness to fraternal charity" and "a work of justice pleasing to God." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2462).

8. CELEBRATE THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

"The faithful are to be encouraged to participate in an ever more intense and fruitful way in the Lenten liturgy and in penitential celebrations." [15, On Preparing and Celebrating the Paschal Feasts]. The celebration of the Rite of Reconciliation is one of the primary penitential celebrations during the Season of Lent.

Did you know that the Rite of Penance was revised in 1973? How we begin the sacrament and other words and prayers have been changed. Not sure how to celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation? Watch this video:

"Sorry You're Doing Confession Wrong" by Fr. Casey Cole

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ffx2fSULvn0>

9. LENTEN DEVOTIONS - Devotional prayer

Devotional prayer also plays a role during the Lenten season although devotional prayer should never overshadow liturgical prayer. This is especially true on Good Friday when many times the Stations of the Cross are attended by more people than the primary liturgy of the day: Celebration of the Lord's Passion.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

"The Stations of the Cross began as the practice of pious pilgrims to Jerusalem who would retrace the final journey of Jesus Christ to Calvary. Later, for the many who wanted to pass along the same route, but could not make the trip to Jerusalem, a practice developed that eventually took the form of the fourteen stations currently found in almost every church. Similarly, the 150 Hail Marys that were recited for the rosary were an adaptation of the medieval monastic practice of reciting the 150 psalms in the Psalter.

Traditionally, there are fourteen stations:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Jesus is condemned to death | 8. Jesus meets the weeping women of Jerusalem |
| 2. Jesus takes up his cross | 9. Jesus falls the third time |
| 3. Jesus falls the first time | 10. Jesus is stripped of his garments |
| 4. Jesus meets his mother | 11. Jesus is nailed to the cross |
| 5. Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry his cross | 12. Jesus dies on the cross |
| 6. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus | 13. Jesus is taken down from the cross |
| 7. Jesus falls the second time | 14. Jesus is laid in the tomb |

VIRTUAL STATIONS OF THE CROSS

For those who cannot be present in church because of Covid, Busted Halo [Paulist Fathers] provides a beautiful and prayer option of the Virtual Stations of the Cross. Click or cut and paste the following:

<https://bustedhalo.com/video/virtual-stations-of-the-cross>

Recipes for Lent

Every culture has traditional food for the Lenten Season. "Recipes for Lent – From the Archives" has an extraordinary amount of Lenten recipes from various traditions and cultures. Click and or cut and paste: <https://catholiccuisine.blogspot.com/2012/02/recipes-for-lent-from-archives.html>. Below are some examples from the website without the pictures!!

Shrove Tuesday:

[Quick and Easy Mardi Gras King Cake](#)

[King Cake for Epiphany](#)

[King Cake for Mardi Gras](#)

[Shrove Tuesday Pancakes](#)

[Shrove Tuesday? Fat Tuesday? Mardi Gras?...](#)

[Pancake Tuesday!](#)

[Irish Potato Pancakes](#)

Breads for Days of Abstinence:

[Fasting Bread for Lent](#)

["I am the Bread of Life..." \(Artisan Bread\)](#)

[Pretzels](#)

Meatless Meals for Days of Abstinence

[Chicken Broth on Fridays: Yes or No?](#)

[A Few Thoughts for Lent](#)

[Lenten Taco's or Tostadas](#)

[Fish Tacos for Friday](#)

[Cheese Enchiladas](#)

[Fish Fajitas](#)

[Meatless Meals for Lent Using Beans](#)

[El Paso Pilaf ~ A Meatless Meal for Days of Abstinence](#)

[Meatless Lasagna and Shrimp Creole](#)

[Meatless Meal from Grace Before Meals](#)

[Mahi Mahi- Meatless recipe for Lent week 1](#)

[Shrimp Pasta](#)

[Meatless Meals :: Crustless Spinach and Mushroom Quiche](#)

[Meatless Meals :: Salmon and Rice Casserole](#)

[Meatless Meals :: A Simple fish recipe for Fridays](#)

[A Shrove Tuesday Treat: Filhoses!](#)

[Mardi Gras Cupcakes](#)

[Shrove Tuesday - Pancake Day!](#)

[Cookie Masks for Mardi Gras](#)

[Pre Ash Wednesday Dust Cake](#)

[Mardi Gras Beignets](#)

[100% Whole Wheat Pretzels](#)

[Hot Cross Buns for Good Friday](#)

[Meatless Meals :: Grilled Tilapia with Pineapple Salsa](#)

[Meatless Meals :: Salmon Chowder](#)

[Meatless Meals :: Rigatoni with Tuna and Sun-dried Tomatoes](#)

[Meatless Meals :: Turkish Spinach and Lentil Soup](#)

[Meatless Meals :: Zucchini and Sweet Potato Frittata](#)

[Meatless Fridays: Falafel](#)

[Meatless Meals: Three Sisters Stew](#)

[Fry-Less Fish Recipes for Lent](#)

[Simple Meals for Lent: Tehri \(from India\)](#)

[Simple Meals for Lent: Ifisashi \(from Zambia\)](#)

[Simple Meals for Lent: Casamiento \(from El Salvador\)](#)

[Simple Meals for Lent: Vegetable Spring Rolls \(from Vietnam\)](#)

[Simple Meals for Lent: Vary amin'anana \(from Madagascar\)](#)

Lenten Desserts

[Lenten Chocolate Cake](#)

Laetare Sunday (4th Sunday of Lent):

[Simnel Cake for Laetare Sunday](#)

[Laetare Sundaes](#)

Passion Sunday (5th Sunday of Lent):

[Passion Fruit Cheesecake for Passion Sunday](#)

Palm Sunday:

[Carling and Fig Sunday](#)

[Fig Bibles and Palm Sundaes](#)

[Tomato, Avocado, and Hearts of Palm Salad](#)

Holy Thursday:

[Holy Thursday in the Home](#)

[Teatime Suggestions for Lent and Easter](#)

[A Lenten Tea on Holy Thursday \(pictures \[2009\]\(#\), \[2010\]\(#\), \[2011\]\(#\), and \[2012\]\(#\)\)](#)

[Judases](#)

[Holy Thursday Unleavened Bread](#)

Good Friday:

[Hot Cross Buns for Good Friday](#)

[Hot Cross Buns - A History](#)

[Hot Cross Buns \(A Bread-maker Recipe\)](#)

[Hot Crossed Buns](#)

[Pretzels](#)

[Chocolate Crown of Thorns](#)

[Good Friday Meal - Tomato Bisque](#)

[Teatime Suggestions for Lent and Easter](#)

Holy Saturday:

[Easter Story Cookies ~ Resurrection Cookies \(pictures \[here\]\(#\) and \[here\]\(#\)\)](#)

[Resurrection Rolls](#)