

## How To Observe Lent

Lent is a time to prepare for the joy and the promise of the Easter celebration. Today as in the past the message of Lent is one of Joyous Hope. Lent offers a new beginning through inner change and penance, true freedom and a new life are made possible.

Spiritual Renewal is based on:

### True Sorrow for sins

You must acknowledge your sins and resolve to turn back to God.

- Recall how Christ Suffered for your sins.
- Seek forgiveness for your sins and take part in the sacrament of Reconciliation
- Pray for help to amend your life.

### Spiritual Growth

Strive to advance toward holiness. Acknowledge your total reliance on God. Cultivate Christian Virtues. Reflect on the real meaning of the baptismal commitment.

- Fulfill this pledge of faith in your everyday life.
- Try to be a reflection of God's goodness.

### Penance

Penance encourages spiritual growth. It is really a return to God, a conversion of mind and heart.

- Do penance to renew your life as a Christian.
- Follow or adapt traditional Lenten practices such as fasting and self-denial.

**Develop a joyful approach to Lent:** Devotions will be more successful if you are:

**Positive** - Lent teaches us that there is joy in the darkest moments.

**Responsible** - Decide on your own plan for Lent in accordance with Church Practices.

**Open** - Be willing to admit sinfulness and the need for change.

**Loving** - Fill you life with love for God and other people.

Choose Lenten practices that are best suited to your needs and hopes, and that unite you with your parish's observances.

### SOME SUGGESTIONS:

Fast an extra day or 2 each week and donate the money saved to a food relief organization.

Try to make simpler and more healthful meals.

Examine your life for wasteful habits: start to change them.

Abstain from material excesses in any way you can.

Devote time to help your parish or people in your community.

Make time for reading the Bible or for increasing your knowledge of Church history or customs.

Teach children to be less materialistic, show them how to use time & money for the greater good

Help your neighbors. Give food and clothes to people in need. Visit the sick, elderly & lonely.

Brighten others' lives by bringing love to your daily work and obligations.

Try to be kinder, more cooperative and more cheerful.

Reflect on your own attitudes and behavior to see how they could be more Christ-like.

Visit church to pray and to examine the direction your life is taking.

## PRAYERS

### Meal Prayer for Lent

Leader: Let us offer God praise and thanksgiving.

‡ all make the sign of the cross

Leader: Behold! Now is the acceptable time!

All: Now is the day of salvation!

Leader: I was hungry:

All: And you gave me food.

Leader: I was thirsty:

All: And you gave me drink.

Leader: I was a stranger:

All: and you welcomed me.

Leader: I was naked:

All: And you clothed me.

Leader: I was ill:

All: and you cared for me.

Leader: I was in jail:

All: and you visited me.

Leader: Lord Jesus Christ, be with all those who are in need.

Bless us, and bless the food we eat today.

Help our families, our school, and our parish keep a good and Holy Lent.

And bring us quickly to the glory of Easter.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. ALL: ‡ AMEN

### LENTEN PRAYER

Loving Father,

In love for us you sent Jesus to save us from our sins.

Have mercy on your people this Lenten season

And help us to celebrate this time of penance and prayer.

Destroy the power of sin in our lives,

And bring us ever closer to you.

Turn us back from sin so we are ready

to live a new life with Jesus.

Heavenly Father,

You have sent Jesus to teach us

To accept your will and carry our cross with him.

Grant us the strength to follow him in his suffering

And so be one with him in his glory.

We ask this grace through Jesus Christ your Son

In the love of your Holy Spirit one God for ever and ever.

‡ AMEN