



Pope Francis' Prayer Intention for March

Formation in Spiritual Discernment

That the Church may appreciate the urgency of formation in spiritual discernment, both on the personal and communitarian levels.

LENT

Pray + Fast + Give

7 Reasons to Use Your Phone More This Lent

by DOM QUAGLIA, LifeTeen.com

Alright everyone, get your foreheads ready because Lent is coming! 'Tis the season of ashes, sacrifices, singing anything but "Alleluia," and the color purple. You can usually tell because all of the Catholic websites and media sources in the galaxy (including us here at Life Teen) are posting blogs about what to give up for Lent.

In this day and age, a popular suggestion will be to give up your phone. To be clear, I think that's a great idea. Many of us are way too attached to our phones, social media, and the feeling of worth or attention we get from it.

However, if you're like me, simply cutting something out doesn't always do the trick. For example, two Lents ago I gave up joy, sorry I mean sweets.

That was, well... terrible. My places of travel that Lent included New Orleans, Disney World, and the Coca-Cola Museum. I was like a vampire who just won a free trip to Hawaii. I couldn't enjoy any of it! I may as well have gone to CandyLand.

Even though it was tough, I made it through to the other side. After Lent was over, I went back to smiling, sorry I mean eating sweets. Looking back, that sacrifice didn't change me very much (other than helping me fit back into a nice pair of jeans). It didn't really teach me a lesson or help me grow. It was just really difficult and then it was over.



Approaching this Lent, I want to experience something different. Maybe you do, too. **If giving up your phone doesn't seem like a good option for you, I have another alternative in mind: Use your phone to do good.**

Sacrifice is good, and fasting is absolutely necessary. However, I worry that **if we don't learn to use things for the good of the Kingdom of God, we might be missing the boat.** It's the same with using your humor to glorify God, or using your body to glorify God, or using your music to glorify God – we can use our phones the same way.

These might sound basic, but here are some suggestions of how to use your phone to do good this Lent. Warning: side effects may include deepening of friendships, growing in holiness, and seeing God in places you don't usually notice Him.

1. Text a different person every day for the 40 days. Affirm them, tell them how they make your world a better place, and ask how you can pray for them. Then, actually pray for them.
2. Set an alarm on your phone every day reminding you to pray. At that time, stop whatever you're doing and pray.
3. Read Scripture every day, and then post on Facebook daily about what stood out to you from that scripture. This will be a sacrifice especially since a lot of our Facebook friends may not know about our faith.
4. Use the iBreviary or any other app to pray the Liturgy of the Hours. This will help you stay unified with God AND the rest of the Church throughout the day. Talk about staying connected.
5. Set three different timers, spaced evenly throughout the day. At each one, stop and reflect on your day since the last timer and all that has happened. Try to see God in each moment, be mindful of His presence along the way, and thank Him.
6. Delete one song a day from your phone that probably shouldn't be there. For each one that you delete, download a worship song.
7. Share a beautiful, inspirational image on Instagram once a week. Write a caption about how it inspired you in your faith and maybe include that you'll be praying for everyone who sees it.

Now these were just some suggestions. Hopefully this got your brain working on some cool ways you can use your phone a little differently this Lent. Who knows, you may end up forming a lifelong habit.



We pray for our parish's second graders who are preparing to make their First Penance this month. Let's join them in experiencing God's grace and forgiveness found in the confessional!

Pope Francis suggested some questions to consider when preparing for Confession:

<http://catholicherald.co.uk/news/2015/02/28/pope-francis-offers-tips-for-preparing-for-confession/>

- Do I only turn to God when I'm in need?
- Do I take attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation?
- Do I begin and end the day with prayer?
- Am I embarrassed to show that I am a Christian?
- Do I rebel against God's plan?
- Am I envious, hot-tempered, biased?
- Am I honest and fair with everyone or do I fuel the "throwaway culture"?
- In my marital and family relations, do I uphold morality as taught in the Gospels?
- Do I honor and respect my parents?
- Have I refused newly conceived life? Have I snuffed out the gift of life? Have I helped do so?
- Do I respect the environment?
- Am I part worldly and part believer?
- Do I overdo it with eating, drinking, smoking and amusements?
- Am I overly concerned about my physical well-being, my possessions?
- How do I use my time? Am I lazy?
- Do I want to be served?
- Do I dream of revenge, hold grudges?
- Am I meek, humble and a builder of peace?

Catholics should go to Confession, the Pope said, because everyone needs forgiveness for their sins, for the ways "we think and act contrary to the Gospel". "Whoever says he is without sin is a liar or is blind," he wrote.