
Father Quindlen, Epiphany of Our Lord Parish, Plymouth Meeting

March 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians:

This year, the first day of March coincides with the First Sunday of Lent. Prayer, fasting and almsgiving are the three pillars of Lent, we learn from the gospel according to Matthew (6:1-18), which is proclaimed on Ash Wednesday. Earlier in Matthew's gospel (4:1-11), we learn about the three temptations of Jesus by Satan in the desert, which gospel is proclaimed on the First Sunday of Lent. The practice of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, especially during Lent, help us overcome our temptations like Jesus overcame his temptations.

"The key to fruitful observance of these practices is to recognize their link to baptismal renewal," the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops states on its website. "We are called not just to abstain from sin during Lent, but to true conversion of our hearts and minds as followers of Christ. We recall those waters in which we were baptized into Christ's death, died to sin and evil, and began new life in Christ."

Our word *Lent* comes from the Old English word *lencten*, meaning spring—literally, lengthening (of daylight hours).

The Second Vatican Council focuses our attention on Lent as a "period of closer attention to the Word of God and more ardent prayer" (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 109).

According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Lent is "the liturgical season of forty days which begins with Ash Wednesday and ends with the celebration of the Pascal Mystery (Easter Triduum). Lent is the primary penitential season in the Church's liturgical year, reflecting the forty days Jesus spent in the desert in fasting and prayer" (Glossary).

From the first day of Lent until the last day of Lent, and beyond, may prayer, fasting and almsgiving be not only the three pillars of Lent, but also the three pillars of our lives.

God bless you,

Father Quindlen