



Lent – A Time of Renewal & Grace, 2021

St. Francis of Assisi Parish – San Jose, California

“Lent is marked by two themes, the baptismal and the penitential.”
-Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 109

Beginning the Journey: Ash Wednesday

The Lenten fast begins with Ash Wednesday— a day when “we confront our mortality and confess our sin before God within the community of faith.” Ash Wednesday is about death because this journey of being born anew to a living hope in Jesus Christ requires that we also die with him, “buried with him in baptism.” Starting with powerful reminders of our mortality reminds us our work of accompanying others toward baptism and personal spiritual disciplines during this season are not a kind of “self-help” or “up by our own bootstraps” exercise. We do not “take on” spiritual exercises. We *submit* more profoundly to the use of the means of grace. We do not “make ourselves better.” Rather, we open ourselves more profoundly to the operations of divine grace. We do not “hang tight” to make ourselves get better. We let go, trusting God, through submitting to these means, to make us more holy.

Prayer is a process of listening to and responding to God's daily call, sustains and nurtures our relationship with our triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Without prayer, personal and communal, this relationship is diminished, sometimes to the point of complete silence on our part.

Fasting assists us in getting our own house in order. All of us have to deal with areas of servitude, whether in regard to smoking or alcohol consumption, misused sexuality, uncontrolled gambling, psychological hang-ups, spiritual obsessions, use of stimulants, immoderate use of the Internet, excessive amounts of television watching, or preoccupations with other forms of entertainment.

Almsgiving: to be a disciple of Christ means to live a life of charity. Our culture is in great need of justice and charity: virtues that cannot be achieved without grace and openness to conversion. There are always unconverted areas of minds and hearts; there are always factors in our social structures that need uprooting, repair, or restoration.

The disciplines of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving that are part of our Lenten journey help us to build our spiritual muscles to ascent the mountain of Easter. Take some time to review the opportunities our parish will offer to prepare us for Easter.

Ash Wednesday, February 17 is the Church's annual wake-up call. Our celebrations of the Eucharist on Ash Wednesday, which includes the blessing and distribution of ashes, will be at **8:30am, 10:30am, 12:30pm, 3:00pm, 5:00pm (Vietnamese) and 7:00pm**. This year there will be a sprinkling of ashes on the top of people's heads, rather than marking foreheads.

THE LAWS OF FAST & ABSTINENCE Ash Wednesday and all Fridays during Lent are days of abstinence from all meat (beast or fowl). Except for a serious reason, all persons fourteen years old and above are bound by this law. The Solemnity of St. Joseph, Husband of Mary, falls on a Friday during Lent (**March 19**). Bishop Cantú, in accord with the tradition of the Church, has dispensed Catholics from the law of abstinence on this special feast day.

Ash Wednesday (February 17) & Good Friday (April 2) are also days of fast. This law binds all persons between the ages of eighteen, until the beginning of their sixtieth year. On these two days, one full meatless meal may be eaten. Two other meatless meals may also be taken sufficient to maintain strength; however, together they should not equal a full meal. Liquids, including milk and fruit juices may be taken between meals.

ALMSGIVING is the foundational call of Christians to charity. This year we will donate 50% of our cash collection on Ash Wednesday to the Black and Indian Mission Office to help local African American and Native American Diocesan Communities throughout the United States spread the Good News of Jesus.

CRS RICE BOWL is the Lenten program of Catholic Relief Services, the official relief and development agency of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Through CRS Rice Bowl, faith communities in dioceses throughout the United States put their faith into action through prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Lenten alms donated through CRS Rice Bowl support the work of CRS in more than 100 different countries each year. Visit www.crsricebowl.org to learn more.

40 DAYS FOR LIFE Help save lives by praying for an end to abortion in our community (**February 17 – March 28**) through prayer and fasting. Knowing that “with God, all things are possible,” people of faith and conscience unite in 40 days of prayer and fasting. Prayer keeps us rooted in the fact that it is our desire to carry out God’s will. Fasting is a sacrifice that helps us reach beyond our own limitations with God’s help. Visit www.fortydaysforlife.com to see how you can participate.

DAILY CELEBRATIONS OF THE EUCHARIST & ADORATION Attendance at daily Mass and reception of Holy Communion is strongly encouraged of the faithful during the season of Lent. Mass is celebrated **Monday through Saturday at 8:30am**. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is offered every Friday in after the 8:30am Mass, concluding with Benediction.

TUESDAY EVENING DEVOTIONS Join us for our weekly live stream Tuesday Devotions at **7:00pm** (also recorded for later viewing.) February 23 (**Lectio Divina**); March 2 (**The Sorrowful Mysteries of the Holy Rosary**); March 9 (**Taizé Prayer**); March 16 (**Evening Prayer & Exposition**); March 23 (**Chrism Mass**); March 30 (**Film: Lamb of God**). You may also view a recorded version of each devotion at any time.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION (CONFESSIONS) We offer times for confessions every Saturday from **11:00am – 12:00pm** in the Parish Office. **Our Lenten Penance Liturgy will be on Wednesday, March 24 at 7:00pm**. We will also offer times for confessions on **Good Friday from 9:00am – 11:00am** in the Gathering Hall.

FRIDAY LENTEN SOUP SUPPERS & STATIONS OF THE CROSS We begin each evening with prayer and conversation at **6:00pm** (via Zoom), accompanied by a simple meal of meatless soup and bread that you prepare for yourself or your family. At **6:30pm**, a speaker will introduce one of the **3 Pillars of Lent-Fasting, Prayer, Almsgiving** followed by your questions or reflection. Finally, at **7:00 pm** we will live stream the Stations of the Cross (**February 19 & 26, March 5 & 12**). We will have an outdoor procession of the Stations on **March 19 & 26**.

“PIVOTAL PLAYERS” Bishop Barron continues on his journey to take people around the world and deep into the Catholic Faith. In *CATHOLICISM: The Pivotal Players*, he unlocks the truth behind the Catholic Church’s most influential people—saints, artists, mystics, and scholars who not only shaped the life of the Church but changed the course of civilization. We begin on **Monday March 22** and continue every Monday night through Lent. **We start at 7:00pm and end by 8:30pm**. Check out our parish website for viewing information. No registration or fee required. Join us from the comfort of your own home.

BestLentEver.com Don’t just give up chocolate for Lent. Join *Dynamic Catholic* for the Best Lent Ever. It is a free email program that will lead you on an incredible journey toward the-best-version-of-yourself. From Ash Wednesday to Easter, you will receive daily emails with short inspirational videos, practical tips for your life, and personal stories from the *Dynamic Catholic* team. Sign-up today by visiting <https://dynamiccatholic.com/best-lent-ever>

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION - On the **First Sunday of Lent, February 21** our catechumens will celebrate their **Rite of Election**. On the **Second Sunday of Lent, February 28**, those baptized adults preparing for Confirmation will celebrate a **Penitential Rite**. On the **Third, Fourth, and Fifth** Sundays of Lent, we celebrate the Scrutinies with our elect. Cycle (A) readings will be used at these Masses.

TENEBRAE (*From Light to Darkness*) is a liturgical service held during the three days preceding Easter Day, and characterized by gradual extinguishing of candles, and by a "loud noise" taking place in total darkness near the end of the prayer. This will be live streamed on **Wednesday (March 31) of Holy Week at 7:00pm**.

HOLY WEEK Plan ahead to join us in the celebration of Holy Week, beginning with the traditional **Solemn Procession of Palms on Passion Sunday, March 28**, continuing into the Easter Triduum: **Holy Thursday's Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, April 1 at 7:00pm; Good Friday's Celebration of the Lord's Passion on April 2 at 12:00pm, 3:00pm, and 7:00pm and 5:00pm (Vietnamese); the Easter Vigil is on April 3 at 8:00pm**.

The celebration of the Paschal Triduum of Christ’s passion, death and resurrection is the culmination of the liturgical year. We invite you to undertake a journey of preparation, in the knowledge that our being conformed to Christ is a priceless gift of God’s mercy. We invite every parishioner to walk with us on the road to the Empty Tomb at **St. Francis of Assisi Parish**.

