

MY LENTEN PLAN

“Unless you do penance, you shall likewise perish.” ~Luke 13:5

“This kind [of demon] can only be driven out by prayer and fasting.” ~Matt. 17:21

“Penance! Penance! Penance!” ~Angel from the Third Secret of Fatima

Lent is a time for penance. Penance means addressing the damage caused by sin. By sin we harm our relationship with God, we harm ourselves, and we harm our relationship with others. The three aspects of penance address those three damages.

Penance includes:

1) Prayer

- By prayer we restore our wounded relationship with God.
- Lent is a time of greater prayer, deeper prayer, and silence.
- Examples: daily rosary, scripture reading, daily Mass, 15min of silence.

2) Fasting

- By fasting and self-denial we restore our self-inflicted wounds caused by sin.
- Lent is a time of bodily self-denial, which is the engine for spiritual progress.
- Fasting strictly means a voluntary denial of food.
- More broadly, it means self-denial of the things to which we are attached.
- Examples: sweets, snacks, soda, alcohol, unhealthy food.
- Non-food examples: non-essential Internet, movies, TV, electronics.

3) Almsgiving

- By almsgiving we restore our relationship with others.
- Lent is a time for acts of charity towards others, be it financial or otherwise.
- Examples: tithing (10% of expendable income to those in need), volunteering in the community, identifying the needs of family members or those around you and addressing them if you can even if that means a phone call or extra prayers for them.

Lent is the time to progress in the moral life, too. Identify a particular vice/sin you would like to overcome. Fervently ask the Lord daily for the grace to overcome it and double your efforts!

Never let suffering and penance go to waste! Many graces are at hand. Make a list of prayer intentions for which you offer your lenten observances.

PRAYER: Out of love for God what extra prayer will I do this Lent?

FASTING: Out of love for God what will I deny myself this Lent?

What will I not see until Easter? _____

What will I allow myself in moderation on Sundays? _____

ALMSGIVING: Out of love for God what acts of charity will I offer my neighbor?

OVERCOMING SIN: Out of love for God what sin will I try to overcome helped by grace?

PRAYER INTENTIONS: For what would I like to offer up my lenten observances?

CURRENT LENTEN LAWS ON FASTING AND ABSTINENCE

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are obligatory days of fasting and abstinence (i.e. no meat) 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.