

LENT

The LENTEN SEASON is the penitential season of *approximately* 40 days set aside by the Church in order for the faithful to PREPARE for the celebration of the Lord's Passion, Death and Resurrection.

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It begins on ASH WEDNESDAY and ends just BEFORE the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday.

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Austere is the watchword for the liturgical celebrations of the Season of Lent:

The priest is vested in violet, except on the 4th Sunday of Lent (Laetare Sunday) when he wears rose vestments.

The sanctuary is bereft of flowers, and less ornate linens and candlesticks adorn the altar.

The use of musical instruments is limited to the accompaniment of singing.

The Alleluia is entirely absent throughout Lent.

The Gloria is not prayed on Sunday.

Most feast days of Saints are observed in a reduced manner.

Weddings are discouraged during Lent.

The LENTEN FAST, historically known by the Latin term Quadragesima, is the 40 days before Easter, in which "the Church unites herself each year to the mystery of Jesus in the desert." (CCC 540)

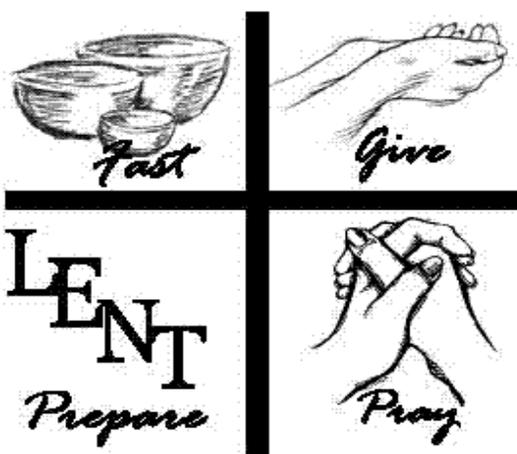
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It begins on ASH WEDNESDAY and ends on Holy Saturday and excludes the 6 Sunday's in between.

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We spend these 40 days in PRAYER, FASTING, and ALMSGIVING.

Prayer, fasting and almsgiving (good works) bring us closer to God by helping us to detach from our selfishness and worldly distractions. This is a time of self-reflection and examination.



FASTING

We give up meat on Fridays, and other foods or activities during the season, to imitate in some small way His sacrifice for us.

What will you *REMOVE* this Lent?

ALMSGIVING / GOOD WORKS

We volunteer to help us to live our lives like Jesus did.

How can you *GIVE* of yourself this Lent?

PRAYER

We pray Lenten prayers to help us better discern His will for us.

How will you *CONNECT* with God this Lent?

PRETZELS: Pretzels originated in Europe during the Middle Ages. A monk was making unleavened bread for Lent with flour and water because eggs, milk and lard were not consumed as part of the Lenten fast. He twisted some of the dough into the shape of people praying with both arms folded across their chests. He decided it would be a perfect treat for children learning to say their prayers. He called the treats pretiola, the Latin word for "little reward."

LENT

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent and is a day of strict FASTING & ABSTINENCE. At Mass, we receive ashes on our forehead as a symbol of penance and sorrow for our sins. The practice of sprinkling ashes on one's head as a sign of penance was customary even in the Old Testament: (Esther 4:1) (Job 42:6) (Jonah 3:5-6) (Jeremiah 6:26) (Isaiah 58:5) (Daniel 9:3) (Judith 4:11,15, 9:1) (1 Maccabees 3:47).



Ashes are made by burning the previous year's blessed palms. The priest makes the sign of cross with ashes on our foreheads and says: "Remember, man, you are dust, and unto dust you shall return." (Ecc 3:20) This is a vivid reminder of our mortal nature:

1. We are bodies fashioned from dust.

"Then the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being" (Gen 2:7).

2. Our bodies will return to dust when we die.

"Cursed be the ground because of you; in toil shall you eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to you, and you shall eat the plants in the field. In the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, since out of it you were taken; for dust you are and unto dust you shall return" (Gen 3:17-19).

MARCH 25

ANNUNCIATION of the LORD: This Solemnity celebrates the Angel Gabriel's appearance to the Virgin Mary, announcing that she had been chosen to be the Mother of God.

FRIDAYS of Lent

STATIONS of the CROSS: This devotion consists of meditating on 14 events of Christ's Passion. It is usually made during the Season of Lent & most especially on Good Friday.

1st Sunday of Lent

RCIA: Rite of Election.

2nd Sunday of Lent

RCIA: Penitential Rite.

3rd Sunday of Lent

RCIA: 1st Scrutiny.

4th Sunday of Lent

LAETARE SUNDAY: REJOICE! Easter is near! RCIA: 2nd Scrutiny.

5th Sunday of Lent

RCIA: 3rd Scrutiny.

6th Sunday of Lent
Sunday of Holy Week

PALM or PASSION SUNDAY: The final Sunday of Lent (Passion or Palm Sunday) begins Holy Week. At this mass 2 gospel passages are proclaimed: One tells of people waving branches or spreading cloaks to welcome Jesus in triumph to Jerusalem, & the other tells of his Passion & death.



Palm branches are blessed at the beginning of Mass & distributed to the congregation. After Mass, people may bring the branches home as a sacramental. Some place branches behind a wall-mounted crucifix or other religious image. Others cleverly fold them into crosses or flowers.

Used palm branches are burned the following year & the ashes are placed on the heads of the faithful on Ash Wednesday.

Tuesday of Holy Week

CHRISM MASS: This ancient practice goes back to the 5th century & stresses the role of the bishop as a successor to the apostles. The priests of each diocese gather with their bishop at the cathedral to receive their church's paschal candle & 3 consecrated holy oils: Oil of Catechumens ("Oleum Sanctorum"), Holy Chrism ("Sacrum Chrisma"), and Oil of the Sick ("Oleum Infirmorum"). These oils are used throughout the year for the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Orders, & the Anointing of the Sick. "Chrism" is a mixture of oil and balsam. Unused oils from the prior year are burned in the sanctuary lamp.



Wed. of Holy Week

SPY WEDNESDAY: This commemorates the day a spy entered the midst of the disciples, when Judas resolved to betray our Lord for 30 pieces of silver. (MT 26:14-16)

End of Lent

Lent ends just before the Evening mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday evening.