

*If you look for kindness, show kindness.
If you want to receive, give."*

- St Peter Chrysologus (c 406 – c 450)

PRAYERS FOR THE START OF EACH DAY

Lord, during this Lenten Season,
nourish me with Your Word of life
and make me one
with You in love and prayer.

Fill my heart with Your love
and keep me faithful to the Gospel of Christ.
Give me the grace to rise above my human weakness.
Give me new life by Your Sacraments, especially the Mass.

Father, our source of life,
I reach out with joy to grasp Your hand;
let me walk more readily in Your ways.
Guide me in Your gentle mercy,
for left to myself I cannot do Your Will.

Father of love, source of all blessings,
help me to pass from my old life of sin
to the new life of grace.

Help me to repent of my sins now and make reparation throughout
this Lenten season and each day thereafter.
United with your Son,
who makes His way to Calvary,
I offer You my intention for the coming hour/day
(mention your special intention)

Prepare me for the glory of Your Kingdom.
I ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son,
Who lives and reigns with You
and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever.

Preparing for Lent



WHAT IS LENT?

Lent begins on **Ash Wednesday**, which is always held 46 days (40 fasting days and 6 Sundays) before Easter Sunday. Ash Wednesday gets its name from the traditional blessing of the ashes taken after the burning of Palm branches (or crosses made from Palm leaves) from the previous year's Palm Sunday celebrations. The ashes are used to draw a cross on the head of people, to mark the beginning of their Lent fast, with these words "*Repent and believe in the Gospel*" (Mark 1:15) or "*Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return*" (Genesis 3:19).

Lent has been a traditional time for deepening prayer, service of others and fasting or abstinence. Just as we carefully prepare for events in our personal lives, as a wedding, or birthday; a new job, Lent invites us to make our minds and hearts ready for Easter with its good news of hope and new life – so very much needed this year.

WHAT'S MY AIM?

How do I want to be during Lent this year? More quiet and thoughtful? More open to God's desires? Better able to give attention to people who need me? More attentive to Scripture, whether in church or in private? Do I need to be more compassionate toward my own fears and failings? Do I need to become more courageous about using the gifts God has given me?

If we want this year's Lent to make a difference, we have to start preparing now. Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent, not the first day to start thinking about our Lenten practices for this year. Traditionally these have been based around -



The Big Three:

Fasting is not just a spiritual diet. By denying our bodies, our physical hunger reminds us of the hunger of our souls for God, our longing for a deeper relationship with our Lord.

Almsgiving teaches us to separate ourselves from material possessions. By freely giving of our money and possessions, our time and our talents, we learn to trust the Lord more deeply for our own daily needs.

Prayer during Lent is a way to stir up our love – for God, for others, for my true self - by having a deepening conversation with the Almighty. Remember that the light of God's love shines more brightly in the darkness of the recognition of our own sinfulness.

PLANNING – WHAT WILL I DO?

Here are some ideas to start you thinking:

- Begin each morning with the prayer: "Lord, I offer you this day and all that I think and do and say."
- Read Scripture for 10 minutes every day.
- Pray one the Seven Penitential Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143).
- Spend some time in silence.
- Abstain from meat or something that you normally eat and enjoy on a regular basis, even for a day or two each week.
- Make time to regularly listen to some music that helps you to pray, meditate, reflect.
- Set aside time to read a book that helps to deepen your faith and discipleship. You could choose the life of a saint, a spiritual how-to, an inspirational book.
- Tune into one of the many online provisions for worship or teaching.
- Find out about and make use of one of the apps available to help daily prayer and study.
- Have a list of people who would value a note or a phone call and commit to contacting one each day.
- Keep a Lenten journal with your spiritual insights, special intentions,

people you want to pray for, hurts and disappointments that you want to offer up and progress reports on your Lenten resolutions.

TEN TIPS FOR THE JOURNEY

Slow Down - There's nothing like busyness for making us inattentive to God, others, ourself.

Learn – At the end of each day ask "What fresh knowledge, understanding of insight have I gained today? If none, why not?"

Be kind – In what way today may I be called on show love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control? How did I do?

Get involved – What has taken me out of myself today and engaged me with others – in my local church, community, elsewhere?

Be generous – what have I got that others need?

Reach out – Who do I know who is feeling lonely, isolated, afraid? In what ways does their life need to be touched – by me?

Pray – Especially for people you don't like and for people who don't like you.

Tune out – Turn off the television, tablet or mobile phone and spend quality time talking with family members or friends.

Clean out the clutter – in the cupboards and the mind, the things we don't need and that get in the way.

Be thankful – At the end of each day call to mind one thing from the day worthy of praise and thanks.

FOR REFLECTION

*"Prayer, mercy and fasting:
these three are one and they give life to each other.*

*Fasting is the soul of prayer,
mercy is the lifeblood of fasting.*

Let no one try to separate them, they cannot be separated.

If you have only one of them or not all together, you have nothing.

So if you pray, fast,

if fast, show mercy,

if you want your petition to be heard, hear the petition of others.

When you fast, see the fasting of others.

If you hope for mercy, show mercy.