

## *Top Ten List: Things to try for Lent*

- 10.** Try an electronic fast. Give up TV, Xbox, texting, tweeting, e-mail and all things electronic for one day every week. (or every-day of Lent!) Use the time to read & pray.
- 9.** Start a prayer rhythm. Say a prayer every time you brush your teeth, hear an ambulance, or check your e-mail. Before you text someone, pray for them.
- 8.** Read one chapter in the Bible each day. (Matthew's a good book to start with. Psalms, too.)
- 7.** Forgive someone who doesn't deserve it (maybe even yourself.)
- 6.** Give up soft drinks, fast food, tea or coffee. Give the money you save to help folks in Haiti or others in crisis.
- 5.** Create a daily quiet time. Spend 30 minutes a day in silence and prayer.
- 4.** Cultivate a life of gratitude. Write someone a thank you letter each week and be aware of how many people have helped you along the way.
- 3.** Be kind to someone each day.
- 2.** Pray for others you see as you walk to and from classes or drive to and from work.
- 1.** Volunteer one hour or more each week with a local shelter, tutoring program, nursing home, prison ministry or a Habitat for Humanity project.

### *Short Lenten Prayers*

#### *Prayer for Ash Wednesday*

Lord, protect us in our struggle against evil. As we begin the discipline of Lent, make this season holy by our self-denial. May the light of Your truth bestow sight to the darkness of our sinful eyes and our repentance bring us the blessing of Your forgiveness and the gift of new life. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

#### *Act of Love*

Loving God, we enter the season of Lent in the spirit of joy giving ourselves to spiritual strife, cleansing our soul and body, controlling our passions, as we limit our food, living on the virtues of the Holy Spirit; May we persevere in our longing for Christ so as to be worthy to behold His most solemn Passion and the most holy Passover, rejoicing the while with spiritual joy.

#### *Act of Charity*

O my God, I love You above all things with my whole heart and soul because You are all good and worthy of all my love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of You. I forgive all who have injured

# *St. James Preparing for Lent*



### *Walk through Lent with a renewed focus on Jesus*

So many times we head into Lent without giving it much thought. Other than giving up something small, that has little impact on our daily lives, we usually sail right through Lent.

To really experience the beauty of Lent we need to take the time to explore all it truly has to offer. From our prayer life, to our sacrifices, to what we give, let's invest in our Lenten journey together to make our Easter one of new life.

## Lenten F.A.Q.'s

### What is Lent?

Lent is the forty-day-long liturgical season of fasting and prayer before Easter.

### What is Lent symbolic of?

The 40 days represent the time Jesus spent in the desert, where according to the Bible he endured temptation by Satan.

### What is the purpose of Lent?

The purpose of Lent is the preparation of the believer-through prayer, penitence, almsgiving and self-denial-for the annual commemoration during Holy Week of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus, which recalls the events linked to the Passion of Christ and culminates in Easter, the celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

### What does the word Lent mean?

It is from the Anglo-Saxon word lengten, which means spring.

### What determines the date of Easter Sunday & when Lent begins?

The Council of Nicaea, in 325 AD, determined that Easter should be celebrated the first Sunday after the first full moon of spring. To determine the beginning of Lent, count back six Sundays before Easter. The Wednesday before the first of these Sundays is Ash Wednesday

### Why ashes on Ash Wednesday?

Ashes are an ancient symbol of repentance (sackcloth and ashes). They also remind us of our mortality ("remember that you are dust") and thus of the day when we will stand before God and be judged. This can be linked easily to the death and resurrection motif of Baptism. To prepare well for the day we die, we must die now to sin and rise to new life in Christ. Being marked with ashes at the beginning of Lent indicates our recognition of the need for deeper conversion of our lives during this season of renewal.

### When does Lent begin?

Midnight on Ash Wednesday. Fat Tuesday (Mardi Gras) is always the day before Ash Wednesday and is seen as a time to indulge before sacrificing. Mardi Gras always ends at 12:00 AM and Lent begins.

### When does Lent end?

Lent ends just before the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday.

### Are Sundays part of Lent?

Technically, Sundays are not part of Lent. Although we celebrate them liturgically as part of Lent, the Lord's Day is a feast and cannot be a day of fast and abstinence. Six weeks of Monday through Saturday gives you 36 days.

If you add to them Ash Wednesday and the three days after it, you get the 40 days of Lent. Some people may find it easier to "give up" something for the entire time between Ash Wednesday and Easter, but it is correct to say Sundays are not part of the 40 days.

LENT  
Prepare

## Pillars of Lent

Just imagine that this Lent is going to be different from any other Lent we've experienced. Imagine that there will be many graces offered me this year. Let's even imagine that God is going to help transform our lives, with greater freedom, greater joy, deeper desires for love and service. Lent will be this wonderful season of grace for us if we give ourselves to it. So, in these days before Lent, we need to prepare our hearts. We need to prepare by realizing how much we want to grow, how much we need to lighten our spirits and experience some real joy, and how much some parts of our lives really need changing. Lent is about conversion, turning our lives more completely over to Christ and his way of life.

What is Lent going to look like for me this year? Take a look at the 3 pillars of Lent and how we can use them to bring us closer to seeing and feeling the grace God freely gives.

**Prayer**-What changes am I making to expand my prayer life?

**Almsgiving**- What can I do to help others in need? Donate items, save money to give to the poor, do service?

**Sacrifice** (fasting and abstaining)-Go beyond giving up candy to giving up some habit that is impacting my life in a negative way.

Prayer	Almsgiving	Sacrifice
		
		
		
		