



Lent 2017

Ash Wednesday, March 1st

- 6:30 a.m. – Mass (Sacred Heart)
- 9:00 a.m. – Mass (Sacred Heart)
- 12:15 p.m. Liturgy of the Word (Sacred Heart)
- 5:30 p.m. – Mass (Sacred Heart)
- 7:00 p.m. – Mass (En Español)

Ashes will be distributed at all Services

Lenten Weekday Schedule

Monday

Mass – 8:00 a.m. (Sacred Heart)

Wednesday

Mass – 8:00 a.m. (Sacred Heart)

Thursday

Mass – 8:00 a.m. (Sacred Heart)

Friday

- Mass – 8:00 a.m. (Sacred Heart)
- Stations of the Cross – 5:30 p.m. (English)
- Friday Night Lenten Dinner – 6:15 p.m. (Parish Hall)
- Stations of the Cross – 7:00 p.m. (Spanish)

Saturday

- Confessions – 10:00 a.m.
- Mass – 4:30 p.m. (Sacred Heart)

Sunday

- Mass – 8:15 a.m. (St. Anne, Cottonwood)
- Mass – 10:00 a.m. (Sacred Heart)
- Mass – Noon (Spanish – Sacred Heart)

Dear friends in Christ,

With the abundance of rain, we are mindful that water can yield a powerful influence in our life. In the same way, the waters of baptism mark the beginning of our new life. In baptism, we die with Christ; and began new life with Him. The Lenten season is meant to draw us into a deep and personal relationship with Jesus. After death, we will rise with Him in glory.

Lent begins this year on *March 1st with Ash Wednesday*. Ash Wednesday is a day of fast and abstinence for Catholics. At Mass on Ash Wednesday, the marking with ashes on the forehead recalls an ancient penitential practice and symbolizes our dependence upon God's mercy and forgiveness.

During Lent, we renew our baptismal commitment as others prepare to be baptized through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, a period of learning and discovery for individuals who have declared their desire to become Catholics.

The death and Resurrection of Jesus unites earth and heaven and reconciles all people to God. In Jesus, we are a new creation. We follow in the steps of Jesus in the Lenten season to share His glory in heaven for Eternity. May we never cease to work to bring this good news to all we meet, in all we say and do.

Your brother in Christ,



Fr. Philip Wells

Reconciliation and Healing



Lent is a wonderful time to celebrate the reconciling love and the healing grace our Lord offers us. Like all religious experience, Lent takes preparation.

Preparing:

Reconciliation is what God does. We prepare for it by opening ourselves up, by reflecting on the areas of darkness in our lives into which God so deeply desires to shine a light. It might begin with a simple question: Where might God be offering me forgiveness and healing? If my answer is, "I don't know," then I have some reflecting to do. I can examine my life – what I have done and what I have failed to do – and see what graces are offered me there.

Coming to genuine sorrow for our sins is difficult. We might think that anything that makes us feel bad about ourselves is something to be avoided at all costs. If we avoid guilty feelings, we ask God to rouse in us a sense of embarrassment, leading to deep sorrow, about any way that we may not have been faithful, honest, loving, selfless, or generous. We can look at our responsibilities as neighbors, employees, members of a parish or congregation, parents, spouses, sons, or daughters.

We might be intimidated by the size of the problem that comes to mind when we ask where God might be offering us forgiveness and healing. It might be a pattern of bad behavior toward our spouses and family. It might be our vices. I might say, "I feel sorry for how I treat my spouse or my children." We may feel remorse for all the good intentions that never make their way into action.

It is important not to stop there. No problem we have sums up all of who we are before God and others. The issues that come to mind might yield clues about some larger patterns. For example, I see that I tend to be loose with the truth at times. What does this reveal about me? I may discover that the real pattern of sin has to do with a deeper dishonesty or lack of integrity: hiding from God, leading a double life, not being who I really am called to be, trying to manage my life on my own terms, manipulating others for my own needs and desires. When the light of God's love shines into this level of self-awareness, I am touched by a powerful experience of reconciliation. Even here, in a place I might be most embarrassed and feel most naked, God is loving me and offering me wholeness and joy.

8 Ways to Pray During Lent

What do we do when we're facing an upcoming big event, celebration, or special occasion in our lives? We prepare for it. Holy Week and Easter are "big events" in the liturgical year of the Church and in the spiritual life of a Christian. So, as Christians, we prepare spiritually for these through the forty days of Lent. This means that, during Lent, we rededicate ourselves to prayer. There are as many ways to pray as there are prayers in this world, but a few prayer methods can help us to spiritually prepare ourselves during Lent:

1. Make your abstinence a prayer-in-action: As Catholics we are called to give up something for Lent. Chocolate, coffee, that extra helping of dinner, one less hour of video games or watching DVDs—whatever it is, you can make what you're giving up for Lent a prayer as well: a prayer-in-action. Whenever you encounter the thing you are abstaining from or the time of day that you would normally enjoy it, take a moment to say a prayer in recognition of your wholeness in God even without the thing you have given up. Thank God for the freedom to be wholly yourself without this and, at the same time, acknowledge the gift of its existence in the world.

2. Renew yourself through personal reflective prayer: Lent is a time of spiritual renewal. One easy step you can take is to use the many free online resources to jump-start or reinvigorate your prayer life. A few such resources are Loyola Press's popular 3-Minute Retreats and Seven Last Words of Christ guided meditation, or try the prayer reflections offered by the Irish Jesuit site Sacred Space. If you're seeking more traditional support for your personal reflective prayer, consider a book specially designed to nourish you during Lent, such as Praying Lent.

3. Pray the Stations of the Cross: One of the most common traditions of Lent is to pray the Stations of the Cross. This prayer helps us reflect on the passion and death of Christ in preparation for Good Friday observance and the Easter celebration. Check your local parish Web site or bulletin for listings of when a Stations of the Cross prayer service is being offered, or try one of the many online resources available.

4. Meditate on Holy Scripture with Lectio Divina: Perhaps the oldest method of scriptural prayer known to Christians is lectio divina or "holy reading." This method of prayer is characterized by the slow reading and consideration of a text from Scripture, with repetition and meditation on key words or phrases. Lectio divina is rooted in the belief that the scriptural word speaks in the human heart as the word of God and can reveal the thoughts of our hearts in response to God. In this way, lectio divina leads to a deeper communion with the Divine.

5. Reflect deeper on your liturgical prayer: When you attend Mass during Lent, be conscious of and meditate on the words you pray in the liturgy. For example, the Eucharistic Prayer, the highlight of each Mass, has special significance during Lent. After receiving communion, you may want to sit and reflect more deeply on this great prayer of the Church.

6. Join or start a prayer or Bible Study group: There are many benefits to praying with others. In group prayer you're able to offer and experience a positive example, needed support and encouragement, different perspectives, and the inspiration to grow in the Christian life. A simple way to get started is to invite your spouse, a family member, or close friend to pray with you on a regular basis throughout Lent. You can also contact your local parish and inquire about prayer groups or prayer circles being sponsored. Or start your own communal prayer group. For example, the Meeting Christ In Prayer kit offers step-by-step instructions, guides, and all the necessary resources so even a beginner can start praying with others.

7. Pray with children or as a family: Being a parent, guardian, or teacher is a holy ministry and a sacred promise. Share your faith with children by letting them see and hear you pray, and by praying together. Guided Reflections for Children: Praying My Faith, Praying with Scriptures, and 52 Simple Ways to Talk with Your Kids about Faith are all practical, realistic resources to help you make the most of your prayertime with children. And don't forget about family dinners. Dinnertime is a great opportunity to start or enliven a tradition of family prayer during Lent. For more children's prayer resources, click here.

8. Start a practice of daily prayer that will last after Lent: Perhaps the best prayer advice is to use Lent as a time to instill prayer habits that will last long after Lent has concluded. Resources such as yearly prayer guides—for example, A Prayer Book of Catholic Devotions can get you started and help you stay consistent. So enjoy your Lenten prayer. And don't think you have to do all the above. Perhaps choose one or two of these prayer methods to concentrate on—and then you can more fully experience the pilgrim journey toward Easter that is Lent.



Renewing Our Lives This Lent

Catholic Lenten Practices

Prayer: We know the importance of prayer in our lives – as individuals, as families, and as a community. Prayer is especially important during Lent. The Lenten season is a time for reflection, evaluation, and repentance. Lent calls us to a personal conversion and renewal – to a recommitted life in Christ so that we might not just celebrate Easter forty days later but also feel the risen Christ alive in us and in the world. This means prayer. During Lent we set aside time for prayer that is reflective in nature and reveals places where we have failed to open ourselves to God.

Almsgiving: The Church calls us during Lent to be especially conscious of the needs of others and to act accordingly. Giving materially to another is an act of Christian charity known as “almsgiving.” During Lent, the Church also calls us to first convert ourselves and then to transform the world for justice, so that we might serve the Kingdom which Jesus lived and preached.

Sacrifice: Fasting and abstinence are not sacrifices for the sake of pain or vain discomfort. Sacrifice for the sake of sacrifice is not a Christian virtue. We are asked by the Catholic Church to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, and not to eat meat on the Fridays of Lent. Feeling an empty stomach, or fighting the urge to have that juicy steak or candy bar does more than just remind us that for some people an empty stomach is their daily bread. Fasting and abstinence help us to ask ourselves the question: “What sustains me and gives me life?” What nourishes me on my journey of life? We will find the answer, not in the steak or the candy bar, but at the end of these forty days of Lent – in the Resurrection of Jesus. We fast and abstain because, when we do, we are reminded of who we are – followers of the risen Christ.

As Catholics, we joyfully engage in Lenten disciplines because we are disciples. We pray, give, and sacrifice because we follow Christ, who loved us so much that gave his own life so that we might share in Eternal Life.

Lent will be a wonderful season of grace for us if we give ourselves to it. And we will give ourselves to it if we want it badly enough. We need to prepare our hearts. We can do so by realizing how much we want to grow in freedom, how much we need to lighten our spirits and experience real joy, and how much some parts of our lives really need changing.

Preparing our hearts is a process of preparing our desires. This means practicing a sense of anticipation. If I imagine Lent as an “ordeal” or a time I dread in some way, then I’ve already predisposed myself to not get very much out of it. Lent is a time to anticipate something wonderful that is about to happen.

Our Focus: What God Wants to Give Us: Our sense of excitement and anticipation will grow more easily if we begin to imagine what God wants to give us. Something is coming that we can truly look forward to. If we focus too much on what we are going to do or not do, we risk missing out on the gift God wants to give us. Lent is about God’s great desire to bless us. All grace comes from God and is, therefore, God’s gift. It is given to us to free us to love others as our Lord has loved us. What we want is to receive what God wants to give us.

God’s Invitation: Lent is a season of being invited by God in a deeply personal way. “Come back to me, with all of your heart,” our Lord beckons (see Joel 2:12). “We will,” we respond, but we aren’t quite ready; our hearts are not prepared. We want to squirm, evade, avoid. We note that our souls are not yet perfect. We think we are not ready for God to love us. Yes, of course I want to have a deeper relationship with God, we tell ourselves earnestly. And we will...soon. God calls to us again: “Come back to me, with all of your heart.”

Beginning New Patterns During Lent: Something all of us can do is committing ourselves to being more reflective during Lent. We can simply make a point of being more observant, more aware of what we’re experiencing, more cognizant of our automatic behavior. We can then start paying attention to our many desires. During Lent, we can examine these desires and see which of them we need to purify, which we may need to abandon, and which are positive desires that we need to act on. Naming our deepest desires will guide the choices we make to establish new patterns for Lent.

Return to Me with Your Whole Heart: From the first day of Lent, the Ash Wednesday readings make God’s call to us clear: “Return to me with your whole heart” (Joel 2:12 NAB). It is an extraordinary invitation from God to each one of us—to *me* in a personal, individual way. God invites me to drop the defenses that I hold up between myself and God.

God wants us to realize that our standards, our ways of judging and loving, are very different from God’s way, and so much smaller. God loves each one of us. For an entire Lenten season, for an entire lifetime, God loves each one of us.

*“A clean heart create for me, God,” Psalm 51:12 NAB offers.
“Give me back the joy of your salvation.” That is exactly what our loving God wants to give us, the joy of salvation.*