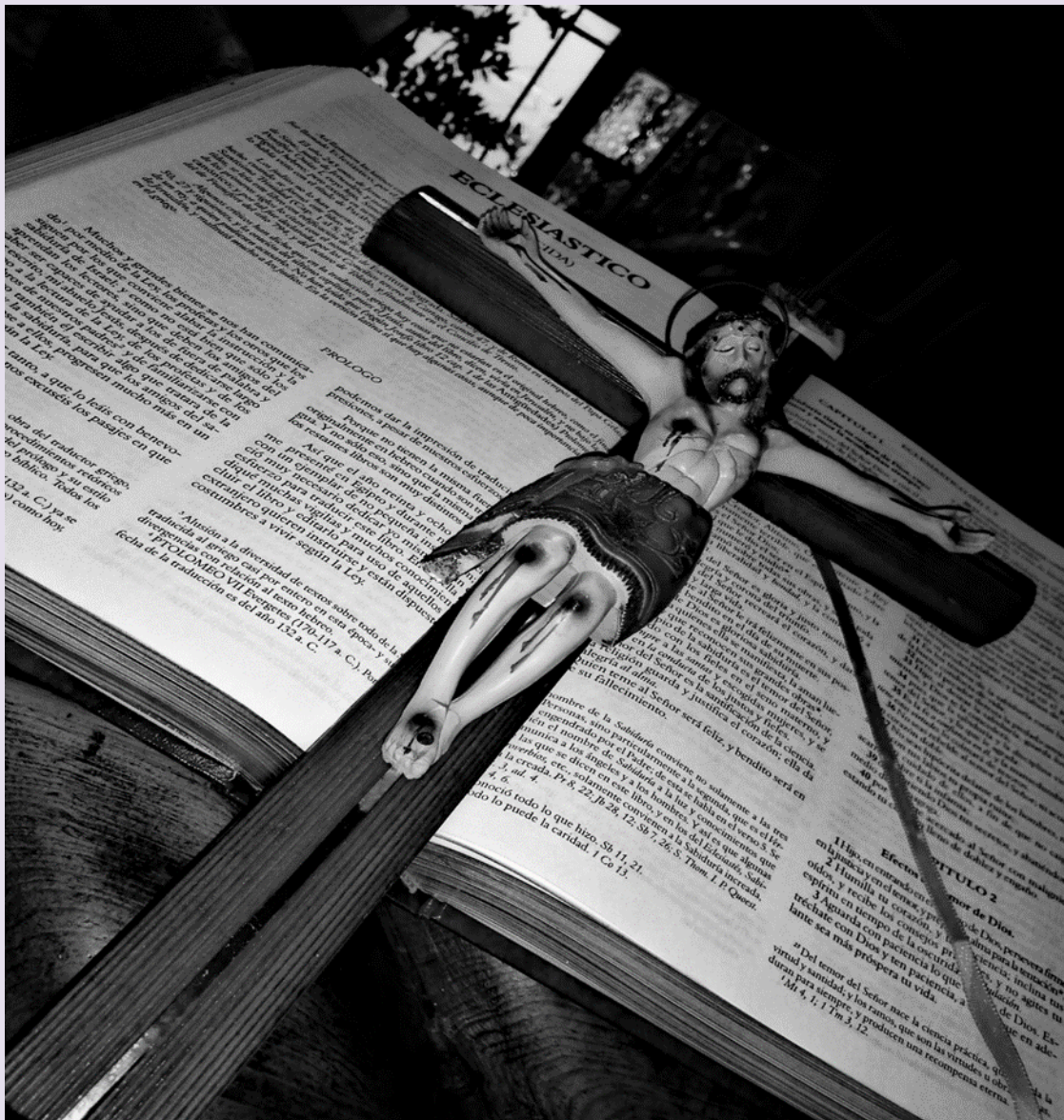


Lenten Retreat At-Home



DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO

Office of Family & Faith Formation

2110 Broadway Sacramento, CA 95818-2541 (916) 733-0177 Fax (916) 733-0195

Family Catechesis: Lent



Lent is a 40-day season of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving that begins on Ash Wednesday and ends at sundown on Holy Thursday. It's a period of preparation to celebrate the Lord's Resurrection at Easter. During Lent, we seek the Lord in prayer by reading Sacred Scripture; we serve by giving alms; and we practice self-control through fasting. We are called not only to abstain from luxuries during Lent, but to a true inner conversion of heart as we seek to follow Christ's will more faithfully. We recall the waters of baptism in which

we were also baptized into Christ's death, died to sin and evil, and began new life in Christ. Many know of the tradition of abstaining from meat on Fridays during Lent, but we are also called to practice self-discipline and fast in other ways throughout the season. Contemplate the meaning and origins of the Lenten fasting tradition in this reflection. In addition, the giving of alms is one way to share God's gifts—not only through the distribution of money, but through the sharing of our time and talents. As St. John Chrysostom reminds us: "Not to enable the poor to share in our goods is to steal from them and deprive them of life. The goods we possess are not ours, but theirs." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2446). In Lent, the baptized are called to renew their baptismal commitment as others prepare to be baptized through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, a period of learning and discernment for individuals who have declared their desire to become Catholics.

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday is not a holy day of obligation and while there is no requirement for the clergy and faithful to receive the imposition of ashes, it is rightly observed as a celebration of high importance. This year, the Holy See has modified the method of distributing the ashes due to the pandemic.

Fasting and Abstinence

In order to foster a spirit of repentance and unite ourselves more closely to Christ, Church law requires the observance of Abstinence and Fasting during Lent.¹ (For further study, see Pope Paul VI's apostolic constitution on the subject.²)

Abstinence

All persons, 14 years and older, are obliged to abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday and all Fridays of Lent. "...[Any] parish or diocesan institution or group which sponsors an event which includes a meal is not to serve meat on any Friday during the year".³ Other forms of abstinence, for example abstinence from alcoholic beverages, television, video games, the internet, and social media, are also beneficial.

Fasting

Everyone from ages 18 to 59 is obliged to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Voluntary fasting on other weekdays of Lent, especially on Wednesdays and Fridays, is highly recommended. Fasting is understood to mean that one full meal may be eaten. Two other small meals may be eaten, but together they should not equal a full meal. Eating between meals is not permitted.

When health or ability to work would be seriously affected, neither the law of fasting nor the law of abstinence obliges. If in doubt, one's parish priest or confessor should be consulted. Airport workers, travelers, and others while on board ships or airplanes are dispensed from the laws of fast and abstinence for the duration of their journey (except on Good Friday). It is desirable that they perform some other pious act instead.

Prayer

Catholics are urged to read and pray with sacred Scripture more intently during Lent, and to deepen their faith by reading the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The faithful are encouraged to participate in special devotions offered by the parish, especially Eucharistic adoration. Other devotions such as the Rosary, the Divine Mercy Chaplet, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and praying for vocations to the priesthood and religious life are also encouraged.

Almsgiving

From earliest times giving to the poor, or almsgiving, has been an invaluable spiritual practice, a religious duty, a form of penance, an expression of Christian charity, and an aid to interior conversion. Therefore, all Catholics are urged to give generously to assist the poor and support the charitable works of the Church, especially through their local parish and the Annual Catholic Appeal.

The faithful are also encouraged to visit the sick, the homebound, the aged, and those in prison, remembering the words of our Lord Jesus Christ who said, "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40). Fasting and abstinence together with almsgiving and charitable works unite us to the crucified Christ reflected in the image of our brothers and sisters who suffer.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation

Lent is a privileged time for celebrating the Sacrament of Penance. The faithful are obliged to confess their grave sins at least once a year.

Preparation:

Choose a place where the family reunion center is, prepare an altar for this Lent, do not forget the Cross, Bible, and candle.

Activity: Lenten Cross



The Lenten Cross, like many practices among the Christian faithful, is of uncertain date. Traditional Christian literature relates the Lenten Cross to Advent and the Christmas season both in terms of what the cross is made of and of what it means to the worshipping faithful. Some Christian families in the United States, for instance, make it a point to save their Christmas tree precisely for the season of Lent. On the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, they cut the rough tree trunk of the Christmas evergreen into two bars and piece them together to form a crude wooden cross. They hollow out six small holes then mount six candles for ritual lighting on Ash Wednesday, and on each of the six Sundays of Lent.

(From reginamater.org)

1st Sunday of Lent

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let us pray:

O my Lord Jesus Christ crucified, Son of the most Blessed Virgin Mary, open thine ears, and listen to me as Thou didst listen to the Eternal Father on Mount Tabor.

O my Lord Jesus Christ crucified, Son of the most Blessed Virgin Mary, open thine eyes, and look upon me as Thou didst look from the tree of the Cross upon thy dear Mother sorrowing and afflicted.

O my Lord Jesus Christ crucified, Son of the most Blessed Virgin Mary, open thy blessed mouth, and speak to me as Thou didst speak to St John when Thou gavest him for son to thine own most beloved Mother.

O my Lord Jesus Christ crucified, Son of the most Blessed Virgin Mary, open thine arms and embrace me as Thou didst open them upon the Cross to embrace the whole human race.

O my Lord Jesus Christ crucified, Son of the most Blessed Virgin Mary, open thy Heart and receive therein my heart, and hear me in all that I ask of Thee, if so, be it be agreeable to thy most holy will.

Prayer of St Pius V



Gospel
Mk 1:12-15

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the desert, and he remained in the desert for forty days, tempted by Satan. He was among wild beasts, and the angels ministered to him.

After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: "This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

Family Reflection

The announcement that Jesus makes as he begins his preaching in today's Gospel is recalled on Ash Wednesday at the signing with ashes: "Repent and believe in the gospel." This is our challenge for Lent; indeed, it is the challenge of our entire life. During Lent, we are invited to strengthen and to renew the promises that we made at our Baptism, to reject Satan and sin so as to live as children of God. Through the grace of God that we received at Baptism, we follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit and know that with Jesus' help, we will be victorious over sin.

As you gather as a family, talk about the importance of Baptism. At our Baptism, our sins were forgiven, and we promised to live as children of God. As part of the Rite of Baptism, we rejected sin and Satan. Read today's Gospel, Mark 1:12-15. During Lent, we renew the promises of our Baptism, turning again from sin and promising to follow God. Light a candle and pray together the Act of Contrition.

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart.
In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good,
I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things.
I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no
more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin.
Our Savior, Jesus Christ suffered and died for us.
In his name, my God, have mercy.
Amen

From Loyola Press

Devotional Activity for Fridays

Stations of the Cross

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ take me along that holy way you once took to your death. Take my mind, my memory, above all my reluctant heart, and let me see what once you did for love of me and all the world.

First Station: Jesus is Condemned to Death

Jesus is brought to stand in front of Pontius Pilate, the judge. He is innocent but Pontius Pilate condemns him anyway and sentences Him to death.

It is really our bad thoughts, mean words, and angry actions that you are being punished for, Jesus. We are praying the Stations of the Cross to tell You that we are sorry for all our sins.

Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be...

The Second Station: Jesus Takes His Cross

Jesus has been beaten by the soldiers. He has been laughed at and spat upon. Now he must pick up the heavy cross and carry it while the crowd yells. He is so tired and sad, but no one cares.

We care that you are tired, Jesus. We are sorry that you are sad. We would like to help You carry Your cross with our prayers.

Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be...

Third Station: Jesus Falls the First Time

The cross is too heavy. It is so heavy that Jesus falls down under its weight. The blood from the crown of thorns is running into His eyes and His back aches from the scourging. People are still screaming and throwing things at Him. His heart must be as heavy as the cross He carries.

It is our sins that make your cross so heavy, Jesus. We are sorry. We love you and we try to be good for You with our prayers and with our lives.

Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be...

Fourth Station: Jesus Meets His Blessed Mother

Suddenly, Jesus sees His Mother. She is standing at the side of the road surrounded by the crowd. Her eyes fill with tears when she sees Jesus. She wants to help Him but she cannot. Both their hearts ache at the other's pain.

Jesus, You and your Blessed Mother help us whenever we ask. Our hearts ache too with the pain of the Stations of the Cross. We promise to pray to you both often, for help in our lives.

Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be...

Fifth Station: Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus Carry the Cross

The soldiers are in a hurry. They grab Simon of Cyrene out of the crowd to carry the cross and make Jesus go faster. Jesus was grateful to Simon for his help.

Simon did not know he was blessed when he was carrying Your cross--he only felt how heavy it was. Praying the Stations of the Cross will help us to remember that carrying our crosses helps You too.

Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be...

The Sixth Station: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

Jesus' face is covered with sweat, blood and dust. It is itchy and uncomfortable. In pity, Veronica runs out to the road to wipe the dirt from Jesus' face. This small act of kindness is all she can do to help Him.

Jesus, we want to see and touch Your face, shining in glory in Heaven. We know that our small acts of kindness and our prayers help us grow closer to You and Your Father in Heaven.

Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be...

The Seventh Station: Jesus Falls the Second Time

The road is so long, and the cross is so heavy. Exhausted, Jesus falls down again. The soldiers yell at Him and whip Him to make him get up. Don't they know that they are hurting Him more? Jesus knows that He is suffering for the sins of the world. He gets up and keeps walking.

Jesus, sometimes we get tired, discouraged, and impatient with the world. When we fail and fall into sin, it hurts You more. We are sorry and we ask You to help us be as patient and brave as You.

Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be...

Eighth Station: Jesus Speaks to Women of Jerusalem

Next, Jesus meets some of the women he taught. They are crying. They are crying for Jesus, and for their own loss ... what will they do without Jesus? Jesus tells them not to weep for Him, but for all the sinners of the world.

Jesus, you told the women of Jerusalem to weep for us. Even in your pain, You remembered us. Thank you. We will pray for sinners too.

Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be...

Station Nine: Christ's Third Fall

Jesus reaches the last hill before Calvary. He looks up to see how far he has to go. When he sees the hill where He knows he is going to die, His strength leaves Him, and He falls to the

ground. There is still more pain, still more sorrow to endure. But Jesus loves us, so He keeps going.

Jesus, you kept going even though you were tired, scared and sad. You loved us then, and You love us now. We offer our prayers to tell you that we love you and want to comfort you in Your great sacrifice.

Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be...

Tenth Station: Jesus is Stripped of His Garments

The crowd has followed Jesus and the soldiers to the top of Calvary hill. Now they laugh as the guards pull off his clothes - His robe has stuck to the blood on His back. The guards push and shove Jesus. They do not care Who He is, they only see that He is a object of scorn.

Jesus, even wounded, bleeding, roughly treated by the guards and mocked by the crowds, you were and are still our King. We ask you to remember us in Your Kingdom.

Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be...

The Eleventh Station: Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

Is this the worst? The feet that carried the message of God's Love and the hands that healed are pierced with nails as Jesus is nailed to the cross. More wounds, more pain and more humiliation for Jesus.

Jesus, they tried to stop your hands and feet from doing Your Father's work by nailing you to a cross. You endured the pain of it for us, as you gave your whole life for us. We thank you and we love you.

Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be...

The Twelfth Station: Jesus Dies upon the Cross

The sword that Simeon prophesied has pierced Mary's heart. The hopes of the Apostles are crushed. The veil of the Temple, symbol of the old covenant of God's Love, is torn in two as Jesus' death opens a New Covenant with God.

Jesus, you spoke lovingly to everyone gathered at the foot of Your cross. You knew the new life that Your death made possible. Speak lovingly to us when we come before You and make us worthy of that new life in You.

Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be...

Thirteenth Station: Jesus is taken from the Cross

Now, all that is left is to take Jesus' body down from the cross. All the gentleness, reverence and love denied through this terrible day is possible now. Mary and the Apostles wonder, Is it too late? Is it over?

Jesus, with our prayers, we join in taking your body down from the cross. We touch You; take the nails out, wash your wounds, take off the crown of thorns, with love and sorrow. We grieve with Mary and want to comfort her.

Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be...

The Fourteenth Station: Jesus is Laid in the Sepulcher

Even in this time of sorrow, there is help. Joseph of Arimathea arranges for Jesus to be buried in a nearby tomb. His body is wrapped in clothes and sealed away. Everyone walks away, weeping. Finally, all is quiet, peaceful even.

Jesus, we sometimes think that You are gone, that it is all over, that we will never be happy or good again. Your death and resurrection show us that You will never leave us. We should always try to follow you with our lives and our prayers.

Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be...