

Numbers of Days



“Forty Days” is one of the more common Biblical periods of time. Depending upon how you count those numbers of days, Lent lasts 6-7 weeks. So, today we are 3 weeks, 22 days or half-way into Lent. How are you doing with your Resolutions? Have you read that book yet? lost any of those pounds? quite smoking? or even tried? Let’s face it. Many of our ‘resolutions’ are things we know we should or should not be doing in the first place. The most notorious ones are those covered in the “Diet and Exercise” conversations we all have.

In reality our Lenten practices can be either a countdown to a binge fest or an opportunity to change our lives. Science tells us that it takes about 21 days to break a habit. Unfortunately this does not include getting over the quitting part. Some research suggests the process may take 66 days. For example, when I quit smoking, the withdrawal process was over in about 3 weeks. However, I was a bitch for another month or so. And I spent yet another month or so apologizing to people for being so irritable.

How about acquiring a new habit? The good news is that it takes about the same amount of time to add a new behavior as it

does to remove an old one – 21 - 66 days. There is a two point takeaway to all these numbers. First of all, don't give up trying! If you're giving up something, add a new behavior that makes you feel good. Find one that eases the pain of withdrawals from something that makes you feel bad, and replace it with something that makes you feel good.

The best news is that we Catholics have a couple of sacraments to help us out when we fall off the beam ... ones that we can receive as often as we would like: Reconciliation and Eucharist. There are several Lenten Reconciliation Services being offered locally. St. James' is on Thursday March 22. That's in 15 days from today. And then there is frequent or even daily Eucharist.

At this point, I'm going to digress to promote Dcn. Peter's Eucharistic Ministry formation on { date .} Of all the Ministries or services areas I've tried, this is the one that is the most grace-filled and fulfilling. As Catholic men and Knights of Columbus it is an opportunity to stand up and be counted. As fathers and spiritual leaders of our families, it provides a role model for our children.

To bring some closure to this reflection, there are 24 days left in Lent. It only takes 21 consecutive days to quit an old behavior and replace it with a new one. In your morning prayers, ask God help to quit the old and add the new for just today. And in your evening prayers, thank Him for the graces He sent to help you change. Repeat the pattern tomorrow and you can change your life one day at a time.

Can I get an Amen?