

# The Lenten Journey

It seems like we just finished celebrating Christmas and the Epiphany, but before we meet again our Lenten season will have begun. So let's do a little refresher and plan a bit so it doesn't take us by surprise.

**What is Lent?** It's that time of preparation just before the biggest event of the liturgical year, Easter. Well that's almost right....Lent ends on Holy Thursday, which starts the Triduum.

**Why is 40-days significant?** From Pope Benedict:

*Lent recalls the forty days of our Lord's fasting in the desert, which He undertook before entering into His public ministry. We read in the Gospel: "Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was hungry" (Mt 4,1-2). Like Moses, who fasted before receiving the tablets of the Law (cf. Ex 34,28) and Elijah's fast before meeting the Lord on Mount Horeb (cf. 1 Kings 19,8), Jesus, too, through prayer and fasting, prepared Himself for the mission that lay before Him, marked at the start by a serious battle with the tempter.*

**Is Lent exactly 40-days?** Well, no....it's actually 44-days....but for spiritual purposes it's close enough.

**How do we prepare for Lent?** Here are a few recommendations:

- When Ash Wednesday kicks off Lent, expect to hear a recurring theme:
  - **Prayer**
  - **Fasting**, and
  - **Almsgiving**

In fact, in the Gospel of Matthew read on Ash Wednesday, Christ himself describes how we should pray, fast and give alms. Decide how to honor and commit to praying, fasting and giving alms.

- Regarding **Prayer**, make use of a *Lenten Daily Devotional* for a few minutes of daily meditation. Visit St. James' prayer garden where there are brand new Stations of the Cross. Maybe go to Mass one more day a week.

- **Go to Confession.** Lent is a time for conversion. As Catholics, among the best means to attain true conversion of heart is through a direct encounter with Jesus the Healer. Jesus touches us and heals us in a special way in the Sacraments, but most especially in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- **Acts of Love and Service.** Fr. Ed Broom writes: <sup>1</sup>Lent must be characterized by an attitude that translates itself into action through concrete gestures of service toward others. Our love in service should start in our own home, amidst and among our family members. We do not want to fall into the Rip Van Winkle complex, in which we are the most loving and kind towards those outside the home, but are devils to those who actually live with us. Remember the saying: “Charity begins at home.”
- **Lean on Our Lady in Lent.** Fr. Ed Broom also writes: In the Season of Lent in which we are preparing our hearts and minds to meditate and receive Jesus who suffered, died and rose from the dead for our salvation, we should invite Our Lady to take an active role in it. Mary was chosen by God to play a key role in the economy of salvation. May Our Lady walk with us and accompany us this whole Lenten Season, up to the celebration of Holy Week which culminates in the Glorious Resurrection of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In conclusion, Fr. Broom writes: let us always rejoice in the season of Lent, which is a gift and blessing for us every year.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://catholicexchange.com/five-ways-to-prepare-for-the-best-lent>