



The Pope Francis Action Team

Lenten Season



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What is Lent?

Traditionally Lent is the Liturgical season of 40 days leading up to Easter Sunday that starts with Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday (the day before Easter Sunday). It does not include each Sunday as this day is linked with the resurrection.

Ash Wednesday

The season of Lent is marked with a special liturgy on Ash Wednesday during which we are marked with the sign of the cross traced on our foreheads using ashes. Ashes are a symbol of mourning and penance in the Bible.



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Fasting at Lent

In the Lenten season Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are special days where Catholics are asked to 'fast' (only eat what is necessary for good health and go without the 'luxury' or extra quantity of foods) and to abstain from eating meat.

Lenten Promises

Ash Wednesday is the beginning of the Lenten journey. It is a special day on which to reflect and decide upon what special 'promise' to make for the Lenten season. Catholics are asked to make a special 'promise' on Ash Wednesday to commit themselves to something they could do in their lives to help them renew their relationship with God and live the Gospel values more fully.



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What should we do during Lent?

Lent is a time to notice God's work and to receive God's mercy. Fasting, Charitable works (Almsgiving) and prayer are the three traditional practices during Lent.

The scriptures during this time, challenge us to also consider how we can repair our relationship with God and with others to become the person that God calls us to be. It is a time to seek healing and reconciliation, and a time for renewing and restoring our commitment to God. It is a time for shedding some of the 'baggage' of our lives that prevents us from being totally open to God. The season of Lent challenges us to ask the questions: "What is it in my life that is in need of healing?" "What could I change in my life in order to more fully live the Gospel values?"



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Why 40 days?

The number 40 has symbolic significance. It is a traditional number symbolising a lifetime. In the Bible it is used to suggest a generation or a symbolic lifetime... a period of growth and change. Thus Moses stayed on the Mountain of God forty days (Exodus 24:18 and 34:28), the spies were in the land for forty days (Numbers 13:25), Elijah travelled forty days before he reached the cave where he had his vision (1 Kings 19:8),

Nineveh was given forty days to repent (Jonah 3:4) and most importantly, prior to undertaking his ministry. Jesus spent forty days in the wilderness praying and fasting (Matthew 4:2)



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Holy Week



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What is Holy Week?

Holy Week is the most solemn week of the Catholic Church Liturgical year. It is the week leading up to Easter and is the week during which we particularly remember the last week of Jesus' life. Holy Week begins on Palm Sunday.





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Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday commemorates Christ's triumphant arrival in Jerusalem to the cheers of the crowd. The crowds laid down palm leaves and cloaks on the floor. This showed just how special Jesus' arrival to Jerusalem was. At church we wave palm crosses to remind us of not only this, but that Jesus would come to die on the cross for us.





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Maundy Thursday

Maundy Thursday is the Thursday before Easter. We, along with other Christians, remember it as the day when Jesus washed the feet of his disciples and of the Last Supper, known as the Eucharist. The night of Maundy Thursday is the night on which Jesus was betrayed by Judas in the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus was praying to God. The washing of the feet is a symbolism that we are all called to serve God and one another.





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The Last Supper shows God's ultimate sacrifice: that He would allow His only son to die for us to take away the sin of mankind. Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane reminds us that we must always have faith in God's plan for us.

Good Friday

This is one of the most important days for us as Catholics. It is the day that Jesus was crucified (when He died on the cross). This was following His sentence to death after large crowds insisted Pilate condemn Jesus to death and Barabbas be released. This was the day in which Jesus died to save us, the whole of humanity, and free us from sin. He became our sacrificial lamb.





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Easter Sunday

Easter Sunday is the culmination of Holy Week. On Easter Sunday we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We read the scripture about when Jesus' tomb was found empty. It is the most important Christian festival, and the one celebrated with the greatest joy. It reminds us that with God we have eternal life in His loving embrace.

