

# Prayer, Fasting, Almsgiving

*Some suggestions for Observing the Season of Lent*

Diocese of Madison Office of Worship | Lent 2017



Lent is a time for Catholics to pray for those entering the Church at the Easter Vigil and to prepare ourselves for Easter by recalling our own baptism and through penance. The three traditional penitential practices are prayer, fasting and almsgiving (giving to those in need). Ideally, we do at least one thing in each of these three categories. The goal of this is to show our love of God by denying ourselves of earthly pleasures (or getting rid of sinful behavior), through prayer, and by loving our neighbor. Throughout the season we pray for the gift of conversion so that we truly turn away from evil and turn toward the Risen Lord. Below are some suggestions for Lent 2017.

## Prayer

- ◆ Pray every day. If you don't have a regular routine, there is no better time to start than Lent.
- ◆ Say grace or another prayer of thanks at every meal—breakfast, lunch and dinner.
- ◆ Pray daily for your pastor and fellow parishioners.
- ◆ Pray for people that you strongly dislike (by name, if you can). Ask God to bless them and to grant you the grace to see and love in them what he sees and loves.
- ◆ Go to daily Mass once or twice a week (in addition to Sunday Mass). If you can't do this, read the daily Mass Scriptures. Go to [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org) for each day's readings.
- ◆ Go to confession. Even if it has been awhile, it's not scary! The priest will help you if you need it. You'll feel like a new person!
- ◆ Read a spiritual book during Lent. Go to [www.madisondiocese.org/lent](http://www.madisondiocese.org/lent) for some suggestions.

## Fasting

- ◆ Fast from a favorite food for all of Lent.
- ◆ Fast from gossip, talking behind a person's back, lying or calling people names. Even if you fail, keep trying.
- ◆ Fast from going out for coffee or a meal at least one day each week of Lent. Save the money that you would have spent and donate to a charitable organization at the end of Lent.
- ◆ Fast from "screen time" at least once a week. Leave your phone off for an hour or two. Find a useful way to use that time to better your soul.
- ◆ Fast from making angry comments on social media or in conversation.

## Almsgiving

- ◆ Donate time or money to a charity or organization that directly helps people who are poor, sick or lonely.
- ◆ Use some of your time for others. Visit an elderly relative. Send a card to someone who may be lonely. Spend some quality time with your children and spouse or with friends.
- ◆ Give God's joy to others. Speak to people who are sometimes "invisible" like store employees, cleaning staff, and others who you see each day. Remind yourself that they are made in God's image and each one is precious in God's eyes.