



February 2023 - April 2023

Lent

A Season of Reflection



WHAT IS LENT?

Lent is the 40-day period within the church calendar, beginning with Ash Wednesday and ending on Easter Sunday.

Lent is a season of preparation and repentance during which we anticipate the death of Jesus on Good Friday and his resurrection on Easter Sunday.



THE HISTORY OF LENT

Lent is an observance that has its roots in the early Christian church and can be traced back to a time when believers fasted and prayed to prepare for baptism at Easter.

Over time, the practice of Lent became more widespread and was adopted by other Christian denominations.



THE PURPOSE OF LENT

The purpose of Lent is to provide Christians with an opportunity to draw closer to God through prayer, fasting and acts of charity.

It is a time to reflect on one's own spiritual life and to seek forgiveness and reconciliation with God and others.

Lent lasts six weeks — long enough to help us embrace real change in our lives.

ASH WEDNESDAY



Ashes and dust are synonymous. Our bodies are made of dust (Gen 2:7), and upon death they return to “*dust and ashes*” (Gen 18:17).



Ashes serve as a stark reminder of human mortality which is a compelling reason to do penance. In biblical times, once people admitted their sins they covered themselves with sackcloth and ashes as a public admission of guilt, a plea for God’s mercy, a promise to reform, and a pledge to resist future temptation.



The ashes used on Ash Wednesday come from the burning of palms from previous Palm Sundays, the residue is crushed into a fine powder, and then applied to the forehead in the Sign of the Cross with one of two statements: **“Turn away from sin and be faithful to the gospel”** (Mk 1:15) or ***“Remember you are dust and unto dust you will return”*** (Gen 3:19).



Antiphon on Ash Wednesday urges us: ***“Come back to the Lord with all your heart; leave the past in ashes.”***

ASH WEDNESDAY

Lent calls us to make daily choices that will help us to grow in our relationship with ourselves, God and others.

When Easter finally arrives we can look back at all our preparations and efforts and know we can celebrate the resurrection.





Let us pray

DO YOU WANT TO FAST THIS LENT?

In the words of Pope Francis

Fast from hurting words and say kind words.

Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude.

Fast from anger and be filled with patience.

Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope.

Fast from worries and have trust in God.

Fast from complaints; contemplate simplicity.

Fast from pressures and be prayerful.

Fast from bitterness; fill your hearts with joy.

Fast from selfishness and be compassionate.

Fast from grudges and be reconciled.

Fast from words; be silent and listen.

