

Season of Lent 2024

Pastoral Area

Maidenhead/Twyford



What is Lent - A Time Set Aside

Just as we set aside time to spiritually prepare for Christmas Day, it makes sense to set aside time to prepare for the two most important days of the Christian year.

Lent is a time that offers us an opportunity to come to terms with the human condition we may spend the rest of the year running from and it brings our need for a Saviour to the forefront.

Like Advent, Lent is a time to open the doors of our hearts a little wider and understand our Lord a little deeper, so that when Good Friday and eventually Easter comes, it is not just another day at church but an opportunity to receive the overflowing of graces God has to offer.

During the six weeks of self-examination and reflection, Christians who observe Lent typically make a commitment to fast, or to give up something—a habit, such as smoking, watching TV, limiting time on our mobile phones and other devices, swearing, or a food or drink, such as sweets, chocolate, or coffee. Some Christians also take on a Lenten discipline, such as reading the Bible and spending more time in prayer to draw nearer to God.

The goal of these spiritual disciplines is to strengthen the faith of the observer and develop a closer relationship with God.

Why Are Pancakes Eaten on Shrove Tuesday Before Lent?

Many churches that observe Lent, celebrate Shrove Tuesday. Traditionally, pancakes are eaten on Shrove Tuesday (the day before Ash Wednesday) to use up rich foods like eggs and dairy in anticipation of the 40-day fasting season of Lent. Shrove Tuesday is also called Fat Tuesday or Mardi Gras.

Lent is an invitation to GROW, REFLECT, PRAY, EXPERIENCE, BE CONTRITE, BE GENEROUS....what an invitation!



PRAYER



FASTING



ALMSGIVING

When Does Lent Start This Year?

The Lenten season begins with Ash Wednesday on February 14th, 2024, and ends on Maundy Thursday, March 28th.

Mass times on Ash Wednesday are as follows:

St Thomas More	10am & 7pm.
St. Joseph's	10am & 7pm
St. Edmund Campion	9.30am & 7pm.
St. Elizabeth's	7pm.

On Ash Wednesday, during Mass a minister distributes ashes by lightly rubbing the sign of the cross with ashes onto peoples' foreheads. This tradition is meant to identify the faithful with Jesus Christ. In the Bible, ashes are a symbol of repentance and death. Thus, observing Ash Wednesday at the start of the Lenten season represents one's repentance from sin as well as Jesus Christ's sacrificial death to set followers free from sin and death.

10 Ideas for Lent

1. Don't buy anything you don't need during Lent

If you can live without it, then you don't need it. Maybe put the money you would have spent on these items in our Church's Lenten Project

2. Throw away 40 things for the 40 days

A better way than throwing away might be to hand on to a charity shop or to other people. The idea, however, is to declutter your life. Make yourself realise you don't need quite so much 'stuff' to be happy.

3. Give up gossip for Lent

The Fathers and Mothers of the early Church were clear that fasting should help us to move away from sin. So a good starting point is to fast from something we might consider small and harmless but which is actually quite poisonous: gossip. If you find yourself in a group which is gossiping, leave the room and find something else to do for a while.

4. Don't eat after dinner (or mid-morning, or whenever you usually find yourself snacking)

This is a simple way to fast for Lent without focusing on a particular food source. Often, we promise ourselves we'll give up chocolate but then just substitute that 'fix' with crisps or biscuits or something similar. Make an effort to give up snacking altogether.

5. Give up alcohol, or fizzy drinks if you don't drink already

This can make us realise how dependent we can become on certain luxuries. These are luxuries most of the human race can't enjoy. Fasting from them can wake us up to the reality of other people's lives as well as wean us off certain dependencies



6. Say 3 nice things to members of your family each day of Lent

It doesn't have to be the same person each day, or even in one day. Just try and find a way to say 3 positive things to the people we love. This one is harder than you think!

7. Don't eat out as often during Lent

And if you can, give the money you've saved to the parish Lenten Project collection.

8. Give up 30 minutes of Screen Time each day and spend that time in prayer

This requires a bit of planning, especially if you live in a busy household. You'll need to find a quiet space to pray. Maybe combine it with idea no. 10 and use the Gospel as the springboard for your prayer.

9. Give up complaining for Lent

Another one which is probably harder than you think. You might find yourself shocked at how tempted you are to complain.

10. Read the Gospel for each day of Lent (you can find this in a Missal or use a website such as universalis.com)

Or indeed use your copy of Gospel Power 2024 'The God who Speaks'.

Some Resources

www.cafod.org.uk
www.biblesociety.org.uk
www.bustedhalo.com
www.hallow.com/lent/

www.catholicicing.com (child orientated)
www.heartinpilgrimage.org.uk
www.thereligionteacher.com
www.rpbooks.co.uk/retreat-with-fr-denis