



Laudato Si, On Care for Our Common Home



Ash Wednesday: Lent Begins!

Ash Wednesday is the day on the Church's liturgical calendar which marks the beginning of Lent, a time of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. On this day, we receive ashes, a sacramental, on our forehead. Ashes remind us that God is the Author of our life and his desire for us to live with Him forever in heaven. How do we get to heaven? By following the teachings of Jesus Christ who gave us a road map to everlasting happiness through his Gospel. Jesus's way can be challenging from a human perspective, however, as the Master Teacher, Jesus always modeled the path for us. For example, by going into the desert for 40 days, Jesus shows us that prayer and fasting undergird the Christian life. Lent reminds us that we too need a season to be fortified for the Christian journey through prayer, penance, fasting and good works.

The word Lent comes from the Anglo Saxon word for "springtide," a season that brings forth new life. Likewise, Lenten prayers and liturgies capture the image of new life won for us through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, received in the Sacrament of Baptism and which gives us an eternal purpose for our lives. As God's children, we become divinely connected to all of His Creation. We see His image in all people and His handiwork in all of nature.

Our God is an awesome God! Lent helps us to

discover His magnificence as we pray, fast and give of ourselves. Through these acts of self-sacrifice and self-denial, our dependence on God for the well-being of our body, mind and soul becomes clear.

Pope Francis writes, "the entire material universe speaks of God's love, his boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God. The history of our friendship with God is always linked to particular places which take on an intensely personal meaning; we all remember places, and revisiting those memories does us much good. Anyone who has grown up in the hills or used to sit by the spring to drink, or played outdoors in the neighborhood square; going back to these places is a chance to recover something of their true selves" (#83)

Can you "give up" some activity this Lent to spend time in prayer with God and reflect upon...

- What persons, places and things of God's creation help you know "God's boundless affection" for you?
- What favorite place reminds you of the magnificence of God's creation? Why?
- How do you depend on God for your well-being?

Give thanks to the Lord

for He and all of His Creation is good.

His mercy endures forever!

March 5 First Sunday in Lent	Matthew 4: 1-11	<i>Name modern day temptations that Satan places in front of us.</i>
March 12 Second Sunday in Lent	Genesis 12:1-4	<i>Name the blessings that God has bestowed in your life.</i>
March 19 Third Sunday in Lent	Romans 5:1-2, 5-8	<i>How do you live as someone who "God has poured his love into your heart?"</i>
March 26 Fourth Sunday in Lent	John 9:1-41	<i>Jesus says that He is the Light of the World and calls us to be "children of the Light." Explain.</i>



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BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE RESOURCE

ANOTHER THOUGHT FROM POPE FRANCIS:

“Peace and justice and the preservation of creation are three absolutely interconnected themes, which cannot be separated and treated individually without once again falling into reductionism.” Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth.” (#92)

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FAST?

When fasting, a person is permitted to eat one full meal, as well as two smaller meals that together are not equal to a full meal. For members of the Roman Catholic Church, the norms on fasting are obligatory from age 18 until age 59.

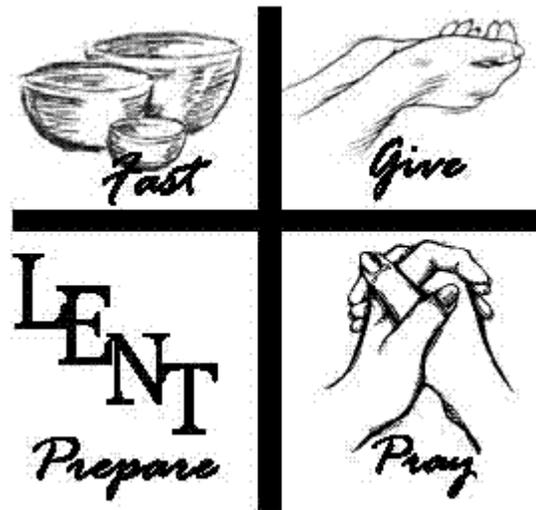
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ABSTAIN?

To abstain means to refrain from eating meat that comes from animals such as chickens, cows, sheep or pigs --- all of which live on land. Birds are also considered meat.

The norms concerning abstinence from meat are binding upon members of the Roman Catholic Church from age 14 and older.

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are obligatory days of fasting and abstinence for Catholics. In addition, Fridays during Lent are obligatory days of abstinence.

BULLETIN BOARD IDEA



What are some ways you can fast to help the Earth?

- Save energy by turning off lights that are not needed
- Save water by turning off the faucet when:
 - *brushing your teeth
 - *washing dishes— use a dish pan and a rinse pan
- Save landfills by not wasting food and creating a compost bin to collect fruit and vegetable scraps
Do not include meat products.

For additional information and lessons, go to:
www.sophiainstituteforteachers.com