



## Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church

VADE MECUM  
**LENT: TIME OF PRAYER, FASTING AND ALMSGIVING**  
*A Little Guide for You*

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Meaning of Lent.....	4
2. Situation of the People Today.....	5
3. The Church as “Mother and Educator”....	5
4. Some Suggestions for your Spiritual and Human Journey During this Lent 2026 .....	6
4.1. PRAYER.....	6
4.2. FASTING .....	8
4.3. ALMS .....	12
5. Conclusion .....	14
6. Books.....	15

## 1. Meaning of Lent

Dear brother and sister in Christ, today we begin the **Season of Lent** which is a time of **prayer, fasting and almsgiving**. It is also a time for *meditation, reflection and making courageous decisions, renouncing evil, resisting all the temptations of Satan*. It is also a time *of affirmation of our faith as Catholics, missionary-disciples of peace, justice, love and truth*. Repent, prepare and connect with the Holy Trinity. Take this time to be with Jesus Christ, our Brother and Redeemer, and walk with Him to Jerusalem to celebrate “*the mystery of His passion, death and resurrection.*”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> POPE LEO XIV, *Listening and Fasting: Lent as a Time of Conversion*. Message of the Holy Father Leo XIV for Lent 2026, Vatican, February 5, 2026.

## **2. Situation of the People Today**

Very often, people are lost, they no longer know how to progress, where to go, what to do. We have young people and even adults *without spiritual guidance!* There are also Catholics who have lost the ABCs of the Catholic faith!

This little “Vade Mecum” can help you live intensely in this Special Time of the Church. Our Mother Church invites us to walk with our Master. Our Mother the Most Holy Virgin Mary is also with us to accompany us throughout this *spiritual journey*.

## **3. The Church as “Mother and Educator”**

Pope John XXIII, in his *Encyclical letter “Mater et Magistra”* (MM) of 1961, speaks of the Church as *Mother and Educator*. Throughout all times and centuries, she has always been a *Mother with her tenderness and love* to accompany us on *our spiritual*

*and human journey. At the same time, she is an educator. She **educates us**, holds our hand to lead us “by the right path” (Psalm 23). She cares about the spiritual and material well-being of the human person. John XIII affirms: “Although the role of the Holy Church is first of all to sanctify souls and to make them participate in the good of the supernatural order, it is nevertheless concerned with the demands of the daily life of men, in what looks at their subsistence and their living conditions, but also prosperity and civilization in its multiple aspects and in different eras” (MM 3).*

#### **4. Some Suggestions for your Spiritual and Human Journey During this Lent 2026**

**4.1. PRAYER** is for us Catholics as oxygen is for the human body. Without oxygen, the person cannot breathe and eventually dies. So, if you want to be alive, my brother and

my sister, “*pray without ceasing*” (1Th 5:17). This was Jesus' secret during forty days in the desert. *He was in permanent communion with his Father God. We too are today invited to imitate him.* There are different forms of prayer. The “*Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*”, number 550 gives us the different essential forms of prayer: “*These are blessing and adoration, prayer of petition and intercession, thanksgiving and praise. The Eucharist contains and expresses all forms of prayer.*”

As for PRAYER, you have The **Holy Eucharist** (Monday to Friday: morning at 8:00 am in English and 7:00 pm in Spanish except Wednesday which is reserved for the Bible Study), the **Holy Rosary** (personal or as a family or even every Saturday at 7:00 am and every day before the 8:00 am Mass and before the 7:00 pm Mass), the **Liturgy of the**

**Hours** (with your phone, you can download certain applications like **ePrex**, **IBreviary**, Divine Office – Liturgy of the Hours of the Roman Catholic Church (Breviary)), **Adoration** (Monday to Friday, 8:45 a.m. to 6:45 p.m. and *special adoration with Eucharistic catechesis every Wednesday* from 7:00 a.m. p.m. to 8:30 p.m.). You also have the *Charismatic Renewal Group Jesus the Good Shepherd* every Friday at 7:00 p.m. and *every Thursday there is biblical growth*. You also have the *Stations of the Cross every Friday* at 6:00 p.m. You can *choose a day of prayer as a family before going to bed*. As a family, you can also choose to come to *mass once a week*.

**4.2. FASTING** is *one of the pillars of this Lenten Season*. What fast does God want from you, from me, from our parish community of Saints Peter and Paul? The

**Prophet Isaiah** gives us the true meaning of fasting: *“Is this not, rather, the fast that I choose: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; Setting free the oppressed, breaking off every yoke? Is it not sharing your bread with the hungry, bringing the afflicted and the homeless into your house; Clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own flesh? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your wound shall quickly be healed; Your vindication shall go before you, and the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer, you shall cry for help, and he will say: “Here I am!” If you remove the yoke from among you, the accusing finger, and malicious speech; If you lavish your food on the hungry and satisfy the afflicted; Then your light shall rise in the darkness, and your gloom shall become like*

*midday; Then the LORD will guide you always and satisfy your thirst in parched places, will give strength to your bones. And you shall be like a watered garden, like a flowing spring whose waters never fail. Your people shall rebuild the ancient ruins; the foundations from ages past you shall raise up; “Repairer of the breach,” they shall call you, “Restorer of ruined dwellings.” (Isaïe 58 :6-12)*

It should be remembered that *fasting means voluntarily abstaining* (from food or something else) for a given time for religious or spiritual reasons. It is a *divine commandment* which is present in ecclesial tradition already since the first Covenant (AT): Gen 2, 16-17; Deut 9:18; Es 58, 4-10; Jl 2:15; Jon 3, 5-7. *True fasting is a spiritual battle and is always linked to “unceasing prayer and sincere repentance”*. The practice of Fasting is a way for us to

*participate in the death and resurrection of Christ. So the spiritual combat of fasting helps us grow in our spiritual life. Fasting is a matter between you and the Lord and is something everyone should know (Mt 6:16-18). For Fasting, **Pope Francis** says that “it is not just about 'food choices', but about lifestyles for which one must have 'humility' and the 'consistency' to recognize and correct one's own sins. ”*

As for fasting, you can ***abstain from one meal each day*** or if your health allows it, you can forgo three meals ***once a week***. Do not overdo it with deprivation of food, water and sleep, as this can lead to death. It is essential to respect the limits of our bodies. You can ***get up 30 minutes or 1 hour earlier every morning to pray for peace and justice in the world***; limit television or your phone, your “tablet”, your computer in favor of ***spiritual***

*readings* (Bible or the lives of the Saints); not to quarrel with one's husband or wife.

**4.3. ALMS** *is the third pillar of this Lenten Season. It comes from the Latin “**elemosina**”. In Greek “**eleêmosunê**” means “*pity, mercy*”. In general, this word refers to the **gift offered to a poor person, to someone who is in need**. I prefer to talk about Charity, about love, because we voluntarily *deprive ourselves of something to give it to others*. Let this become our lifestyle. **Pope Francis** says this: “*The duty of almsgiving is as old as the Bible. Sacrifice and almsgiving were two duties that a religious person had to adhere to. There are important pages in the Old Testament where God requires special attention to the poor who, in turn, are those who have nothing, strangers, orphans and widows*”. Jesus invites us **to do this with joy, love and humility**.*

As for Almsgiving, you can *put into practice the spiritual Works of Mercy* (Counseling the doubtful, instructing the ignorant, admonishing the sinner, comforting the sorrowful, forgiving injuries, bearing wrongs patiently, praying for the living and the dead) and *corporeal ones* (Feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, visit the imprisoned, bury the dead).

## **5. Conclusion**

Dear brothers and sisters, Jesus Christ and Our Mother the Virgin Mary are with us throughout this journey towards Easter. This Lenten Season is a special time for each of us, for our families, for our parish and diocesan community and our Catholic Church. Let us live it with joy, faith and hope.

I hope that this little guide can be useful to you for your spiritual and human growth. Have a good Lenten journey!

## 6. Books

1. Bible ([Books of the Bible | USCCB](#))
2. POPE LEO XIV, *Listening and Fasting: Lent as a Time of Conversion*. Message of the Holy Father Leo XIV for Lent 2026, Vatican, February 5, 2026.
3. POPE FRANCIS, Message of his Holiness Pope Francis for Lent 2024 *Through the Desert God Leads us to Freedom*, in [Lent 2024: Through the Desert God Leads us to Freedom | Francis \(vatican.va\)](#) - Francis, Mensaje del Santo Padre Francisco para la Cuaresma 2024 *A través del desierto Dios nos guía a la libertad*, in [Cuaresma 2024: A través del desierto Dios nos guía a la libertad | Francisco \(vatican.va\)](#)
4. Vatican, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church - Compendio de la doctrina social de la Iglesia*

5. Thomas à Kempis, *L'imitation du Christ*
6. USCCB, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility from the Catholic Bishops of the United States - Formando la conciencia para ser ciudadanos fieles: Llamado de los obispos católicos de los Estados Unidos a la responsabilidad política.*

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**Ash Wednesday, February 18, 2026**