

LITURGICAL LIVING

Series 24: February 03- 10

What's the Deal with Lent?

Ash Wednesday is on February 14! Yes, Ash Wednesday lines up with Valentine's Day this year. With Ash Wednesday just around the corner, I want to dedicate some time to focusing on Lent.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and ends before the Mass of the Last Supper on Holy Thursday. Holy Thursday begins the Triduum season - a "three day" liturgical season that also includes Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. Lent and Triduum are distinct but one builds on the other.



But back to Lent! During this time we are called to prepare our hearts and minds for the joy of Easter. We reflect and participate in the sufferings of Christ that He endured for our salvation - we do this through prayer, fasting and almsgiving (the Three Pillars, more on this later!). A note on fasting: during Lent, the Church truly only requires us to fast and abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday and Holy Friday. Additionally, we are required to abstain from meat on all Lenten Fridays (during the year we are encouraged - but not required - to give up meat on Fridays; if not meat, we should be offering a substitute penance).

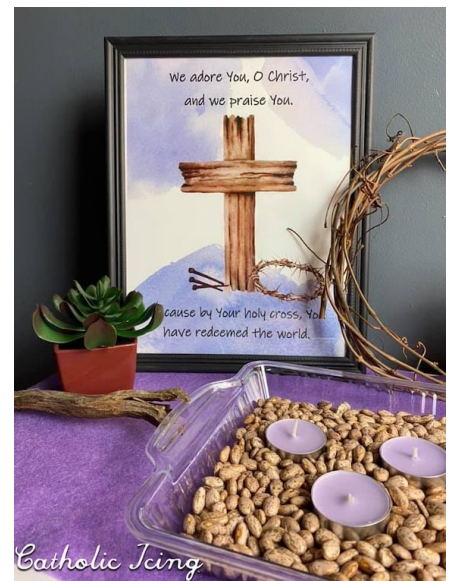
Lent helps us be better disciples and this requires discipline. Because of this, it is good to go into Lent with a plan. Take some time this week to reflect on what you want yourself and your family to improve upon in this season. Remember, Lent is not a time to punish oneself, but rather perfect oneself, with the help of grace. There is a misconception out there that you are supposed to be miserable for the forty days of Lent and that is just not true. Yes, there are times when we are able to challenge ourselves more during Lent but what we need changes year to year and we must ask what the Lord is calling us to! We can think of Lent in the eyes of "attachment." There are many good things in the world like coffee, TV, sweets, etc. that are not sinful in themselves but when we see them as things we require or things we deserve, we may need to take the effort to detach ourselves from these things so we can be more available to know God, love God, and serve God.

START OF LENT

- Create a space in your home that reminds you of the season.
- Create physical reminders of the spiritual dessert.

FRIDAYS IN LENT

- Go Meatless: We give up meat on Fridays in Lent as an act of penance and sacrifice, to remind us of the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross, and to focus on our spiritual journey and repentance during this season.
- Pray the Stations of the Cross: We pray the Stations of the Cross in remembrance of Christ's sacrifice for us. You can pray at home or go to a local church for their service. Stations happen on Wednesdays at 6:30 in Nicollet and Fridays at 6:30 in St. Peter.



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What's the Deal with Lent? Continued

THROUGHOUT LENT

Practice the Three Pillars of Lent: Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving. Each person will have their own level that only you can decide. I will provide a simple list that can easily be expanded as you see fit. :) There are also many resources with lists of things to do for Lent that you can find as well. Here is one from [Hallow](#).

Prayer

- Write down one thing you're grateful for daily
- Pray one Hail Mary or Rosary before bed
- Listen to one soothing playlist on repeat all Lent
- Set a timer to sit in silence for a set time each day (1 minute, 5, etc.)
- Read the four Gospels and Acts

Fasting (Giving Up)

- Avoid beating yourself up if your day didn't go as planned
- Avoid watching TV with dark or intense imagery
- Avoid listening to music, podcasts, or audiobooks in the car (allow for silence)
- Avoid bad language
- Avoid non essential spending
- DO
 - Drink more water and eat more vegetables
 - Read a book before bed (instead of phone scrolling)
 - Take a daily walk



Almsgiving

- Every week send a heartfelt message to a friend or family member (text or handwritten card)
- Donate 5 dollars per week to an organization that serves the poor
- Volunteer at a soup kitchen or food pantry

SUNDAYS IN LENT

Sunday is a day of celebration and remembrance of the Resurrection. Each Sunday is considered a "little Easter." If you count the days of Lent with Sundays it is more than forty days. These days were added so Catholics could set aside Lenten disciplines on Sundays and to live the character of joy on Sundays. However, we should not set aside the things we are trying to improve in ourselves on Sundays. It is everyone's personal decision regarding their fasting on Sundays but you are still encouraged to feast in remembrance of the Resurrection in some way!

St. Josephine Bakhita

Born circa 1869 in Olgosaa, Sultanate of Darfur (present day Sudan) and died 1947 in Schio, Italy.

She is the patron Saint of Sudan and human-trafficking survivors.

The first black woman declared a saint in the modern era, St. Josephine Bakhita was born in Sudan, kidnapped and sold into slavery at age seven, and eventually taken to Italy. There she discovered Catholicism, fought for her freedom by winning a legal battle, and became a religious sister.

“Seeing the sun, the moon, and the stars, I said to myself, who could be the Master of these beautiful things? And I felt a great desire to meet him, to know him, and to pay him homage.”

Pray.

Pray for those affected by human trafficking on this day.

Find Freedom in Your Life

Invite God to enlighten you to the areas of your life in which you are not free. What enslaves you? Your phone? Resentment? Addiction? A relationship? Be honest with yourself and ask God to free you.

Journal about ways that you can find freedom and find resources that can help you. Ask for St. Josephine Bakhita’s intercession.



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St. Josephine Bakhita



Oh, St. Bakhita, help those who are trapped in slavery; intercede on their behalf before God so that they are freed from the chains of captivity. May God free anyone who has been enslaved by man. Provide relief to those who survive slavery and allow them to see Him as a model of faith and hope.