

LENT 2025



The Season of Lent is an opportunity to step away from the busy-ness and distraction of daily life and the usual routine by focusing on prayer, fasting (sacrifice), and almsgiving (giving). This is not so as to end up thinner, richer, and more disciplined. Rather, it's an invitation to grow closer to God, who is always waiting, watching, and wanting us ready to welcome us back, no matter where we've been, what we've been doing, or how long we've been gone. Join me on this Lenten journey and spend some time with God. We've got all kinds of opportunities to do just that this Lent. They're listed on our website (OurLadyoftheFields.org/lent-and-easter for more details) and on the reverse.

Remember the basics: Prayer, fasting and almsgiving. If you're looking to increase your prayer life, join us for daily Mass or Eucharistic Adoration. Try reading the scriptures. Start with Luke's Gospel we're reading in this liturgical year. Spend a few minutes every day in quiet prayer. It doesn't need to be long but intentional and regular. Receive God's love and mercy in the sacrament of Reconciliation. Been away for awhile? No sweat; the priest can walk you through it.

If you're looking to fast more this Lent, don't just give up chocolate. The intention of fasting is not merely to deprive yourself but to create a hunger in yourself reminding you of what should be your hunger for God. Take Pope Francis's challenge below. Try giving up television or social media. Again this is not merely to detox (although it can help) but to create space for God. Spend the new found time in prayer with God or with your family or friends.

Scripture reminds us that one of the best ways to enter fully into Lent is to give more: *Charity covers a multitude of sins* (1 Peter 4:8). This is a call to share your blessings with others but, even more, a call for you to trust in the Giver of those blessings you have received. Increase your generosity by participating in the Rice Bowl or Easter SPAN Meals or making a casserole for Our Daily Bread. Increase your giving to the Poor Box, the Annual Appeal for Catholic Ministries, or to our community in the offertory. All of these are simple, but none come easily when we are focused on something other than God.

This Lenten season of 2025 is a special one because it falls within the Jubilee of Hope. Every 25 years (and sometimes more often), the Church calls a Jubilee. "Jubilee" was the name given by ancient Israelites to a year of re-establishing a proper relationship with God, with one another, and with all of creation. Since ancient times, this has also involved the forgiveness of debts, the return of misappropriated land, and a fallow period for the fields. In 1300, Pope Boniface VIII called the first Jubilee, also known as a "Holy Year," since it is a time in which God's holiness transforms us.

The essence of the Jubilee (and Lent for that matter as well!) is intentionally encountering Christ and allowing others to do so as well. Quoting the prophet Isaiah, Jesus described His mission in the Gospel of Luke: *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord,"* (Lk 4:18-19; cf. Isaiah 61:1-2). Jesus lived out these words in his encounters with others and in his relationships, all of which bring about liberation and conversion. In intentionally seeking Jesus and in drawing others, we share in His mission and can proclaim "a [Jubilee] year acceptable to the Lord." Lent is the perfect time to start or to reboot. Become a Pilgrim of Hope. You won't be sorry.



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 and contemplate simplicity.
- Fast from pressure and be prayerful.
- Fast from bitterness and fill your hearts with joy.
- Fast from selfishness and be compassionate.
- Fast from grudges and be reconciled.
- Fast from words and be silent so you can listen.