

THE SEASONS OF LENT, PASCHAL TRIDUUM AND EASTER

WHAT IS LENT?

Lent is a 40-day period of preparation for Easter Sunday and one of the major liturgical seasons of the Catholic Church. Signifying the 40 days that Jesus spent in the desert after His baptism, it is a penitential season marked by prayer, fasting and abstinence, and almsgiving.

Lent is not necessarily about “giving something up” for 40 days only to return to it on day 41 or afterward, but is a period of ongoing conversion so that we may draw closer to Jesus. When we repent for our sins and then make a permanent- rather than temporary- change in our lifestyle, a spiritual transformation can take place. At the heart of repentance lies the call to conversion. “Repent and believe in the Gospel” ([Mark 1:15](#))!

THE SEASON OF LENT: INTO THE WILDERNESS WITH CHRIST

The Season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and ends with the Celebration of the Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday. For this year’s dates, explore our Liturgical Calendar webpage at <http://cmvic.net/liturgical-calendars>. Printer friendly resources on our Season of Lent webpage (<http://cmvic.net/season-of-lent>) include:

- 40 in the Bible (<http://cmvic.net/40-in-the-bible>)
- Triumphal Entry to Ascension: Holy Week & Beyond (<http://cmvic.net/holy-week-and-beyond>)
- Lenten Guidelines: Canon Law and More (<http://cmvic.net/lenten-guidelines>)
- Stations of the Cross: Prayers and Paintings (<http://cmvic.net/stations-of-the-cross>)
- Season of Lent & Paschal Triduum video webpage (<http://cmvic.net/lenten-videos>)

ASH WEDNESDAY: WHAT’S WITH THAT DIRT ON YOUR HEAD?

Who hasn’t gotten that question on Ash Wednesday before? Do you feel silly when people ask you about your ashes? And is it hard to answer their questions? Having ashes on your forehead isn’t just some weird Catholic thing: it’s a tradition that finds its roots in the Old Testament. “I turned to the Lord God, to seek help, in prayer and petition, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes” ([Daniel 9:3](#)).

When the ashes are placed on our foreheads in the sign of the Cross, it is a reminder of several things. First, it is a call to repentance: a physical sign that we are sinners in need of forgiveness, which is how the prophets used it in the Old Testament. Second, it is to remind us that God created us from the earth and when we die, we will return to it.

<http://cmvic.net/season-of-lent>

But here's the best part: As Pope Benedict XVI said, "Man is dust and to dust he shall return, but dust is precious in God's eyes because God created man, destining him to immortality."

God so loves us that, even when our bodies return to the dust, our souls are meant to live forever with him. The ashes symbolize all of this. Not so silly anymore, is it?

~ excerpted with permission from the USCCB website.

HOLY WEEK AND BEYOND: FROM TRIUMPHAL ENTRY TO ASCENSION

<http://cmvic.net/holy-week-and-beyond>

View and/or print a user friendly chart that walks you through the 4 Gospels, beginning with Christ's Triumphal Entry on Palm Sunday and concludes with His Ascension to the right hand of the Father. A great resource for Home/Church Bible Studies, Religious Education and personal spiritual enrichment!

STATIONS OF THE CROSS: PRINTOUTS, PRAYERS & PAINTINGS!

<http://cmvic.net/stations-of-the-cross>

For Roman Catholics throughout the world, the Stations of the Cross are synonymous with Lent, Holy Week and, especially, Good Friday. This devotion is also known as the "Way of the Cross," the "Via Crucis" and the "Via Dolorosa."

Stations of the Cross commemorates 14 key events on the day of Christ's crucifixion. The majority concern His final walk through the streets of Jerusalem, carrying His Cross.

To view prayers and paintings for each of the Stations of the Cross and much more, please explore our Stations of the Cross webpage.

THE PASCHAL TRIDUUM: 3 DAYS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

The Paschal Triduum begins on Holy Thursday with the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper and ends with Evening Prayer on Easter Sunday. For this year's dates, explore our Liturgical Calendar webpage.

Catechism of the Catholic Church #1168: Beginning with the Easter Triduum as its source of light, the new age of the Resurrection fills the whole liturgical year with its brilliance. Gradually, on either side of this source, the year is transfigured by the liturgy. It really is a "year of the Lord's favor." The economy of salvation is at work within the framework of time, but since its fulfillment in the Passover of Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the culmination of history is anticipated "as a foretaste," and the kingdom of God enters into our time.

<http://cmvic.net/season-of-lent>

THE SEASON OF EASTER: NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

The Easter Season, joyfully celebrating the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and His Victory over sin and death for all time, begins on Easter Sunday and ends with Evening Prayer on the Solemnity of Pentecost. For this year's dates, explore our Liturgical Calendar webpage.

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