

WALKING with Christ

MARCH-APRIL 2022

Nurturing Our Families of Faith

LENT EDITION



Some images have links.

Humble yourselves, therefore,
under God's mighty hand, that He
may lift you up in due time.

1 Peter 5:6



Welcome the Season with Fasting, Praying & Giving

**A message from the TCDSB
Nurturing Our Catholic
Community Team**

Welcome to "Nurturing our Families of Faith." This is a newsletter to support the faith journey of students, staff, and their families across The Toronto Catholic District School Board during this Lenten season.

We are grateful for the chance to share this journey with you, and we hope this newsletter will be helpful to you as you live out your faith in these challenging times.



The Lenten Season

As we enter the third Lenten season since the COVID-19 pandemic began, we ponder and reflect on what has transpired since this time last year. This year, we will be able to attend Sunday Masses during Lent, now that churches are back to full capacity. We will have opportunities to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation: these next 40 days are to be spent in contemplation and repentance, as we join Jesus in the desert. This Lenten season may have greater significance for us this year: perhaps we have suffered loss, hardship, physical, emotional, or mental anguish; but these experiences help us to relate to Christ and His suffering. Perhaps we are also fearful of the future, as we see events unfolding across the globe, but we must always remember that our Lord is with us, and will never abandon us.

We also think of the great and amazing sacrifice which Christ made for us through His suffering, once and for all, and revel in that love which we know is never ending and boundless. We are thankful for this love, and are safe in the knowledge that God will always be there for us.

[Pope Francis](#) reminds us that "Lent invites us to conversion, to a change in mindset, so that life's truth and beauty may be found not so much in possessing as in giving, not so much in accumulating as in sowing and sharing goodness." Pope Francis says that each year during Lent, "we are reminded that 'goodness, together with love, justice, and solidarity, are not achieved once and for all; they have to be realized each day.'"

LENT INFOGRAPHICS

WHAT IS LENT?

Lent is a time of **prayer** and **penance**, when Christ wants to lead us back to our baptismal promises of **dying to sin** and of **living for God**.

WHEN IS LENT?

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and continues until the afternoon of Holy Thursday. It runs for about 40 days.

WHY 40 DAYS? The "40 days" (not including Sundays) of fasting, prayer, and penance before Easter reflect Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO DURING LENT?

1. Turn away from our sins and turn back to God. Detach from habits and tendencies that are contrary to God's will. Lent is a time of conversion.
2. Open our hearts to our Father, so that we may live with Christ for God. Jesus is calling us to be people of praise and prayer, and living signs of his love for all.

"This time of fasting opens the gates of heaven to us. Let us welcome it and pray that when Easter comes we may share the joy of the risen Lord."
LENTEN RESPONSORY

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Text from Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops' "Living Lent"

What are you doing for Lent?

10 IDEAS FOR A MORE MEANINGFUL LENTEN SEASON

1. Give up sin

Show your love for God by keeping his commandments. Turn away from sins.

2. Fast

An empty stomach can lead to more attentive prayer. Give the money you saved on food to others in alms.



3. Pray

Be in constant prayer. Pray for your family and friends, for those who suffer, and for the Church and the world.

4. Do good works

Help those in need. Pray for them and be ready to serve them in their time of need.



5. Give alms

Help the poor and support the good works of the Church. Give cheerfully to God who has given us everything we have.



7. Do meditative reading

Nourish your faith by spending time in quiet reading and reflection. Prayerful reading of God's word each day will open your heart to the Spirit, and let God's thoughts and ways influence yours.

8. Control desire for possessions

Build up treasures in heaven rather than on earth. Cut down on material possessions, eliminate frills, lessen wants, share yourself – your time and your talents – with others.



9. Control desire for entertainment

Too much entertainment and other distractions can lead to less or no time for the works of the Lord.




6. Abstain

Give up meat or other desirable foods during Lent, especially on Friday, the day of Christ's saving death on the cross.

10. Carry out duties in life

Serve God by living out your vocation in love each day. God is calling each of us to be a living sacrifice. Offer your daily life through Christ!

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Text from Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops' "Living Lent"

For more infographics please visit the Archdiocese of Toronto website

We mark our foreheads with ashes to remind ourselves that **we are not of this world** and are made for **eternity with God**.

"For You have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find rest in You."
-St. Augustine of Hippo

Where do the ashes come from?

The ashes are made from the **blessed palms** used in the Palm Sunday celebration of the previous year.



WHY THE ASHES?

Ashes are a public sign of our intent to **die to our worldly desires** and **live in Christ**.

As our foreheads are marked with ashes, these words are said: **"Remember, that you are dust, and unto dust you shall return."**

Ashes were used as a sign of repentance in the Old Testament:

"Then I turned to the Lord God, to seek an answer by prayer and supplication with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. I prayed to the Lord my God and made confession" -Daniel 9:3-4

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ARE SUNDAYS PART OF LENT?



Lent runs from **Ash Wednesday** until the **Mass of the Lord's Supper (Holy Thursday)** exclusive

FROM THE GENERAL NORMS FOR THE LITURGICAL YEAR AND THE CALENDAR, 28

*Sundays and solemnities are **never** days of penance and fasting.*

These days provide a moment of refreshment in anticipation of the Resurrection. Sunday is the day on which Jesus rose from the dead, therefore we should not be fasting and mourning our sins on this day. Sundays are also not counted in the 40 days of Lent.

While Lenten Sundays are not days of penance and fasting, they are still celebrated differently from the Sundays in Ordinary Time. During Lent, we focus on the **journey towards the resurrection**, whereas outside of Lent, we **rejoice in the resurrection**.

If we gave something up for Lent, can we indulge in it on Sundays?
You should not go out of your way on Lenten Sundays to indulge in whatever you gave up for Lent. **However**, you also do not need to actively avoid it, as long as whatever you gave up is not something you shouldn't do or consume in the first place. **Actively avoiding is considered fasting, which is forbidden on Sundays, even during Lent.**

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IMAGES: OSHTAWA'S ST. HEDWIG'S PARISH DURING LENT AND STAINED GLASS WINDOW FROM ST. ANSELM'S PARISH, TORONTO

PRAYING AS A FAMILY

Guided Meditation for the beginning of Lent, based on the temptation of Jesus in the desert (Matthew 4:1-11).

And we pray:

Loving God, we come to you with open hearts as we meditate.

We want to be confident of your love, but sometimes our doubt undermines our total trust.

We pray today that you will deepen our faith so that we may rely on you more completely.

We pray that your kingdom will unfold in our lives. That your kingdom may become real

And that we too may be real.

With your eyes still closed.

Take a slow journey. Travel to a place where you can be all alone. Where no one else would venture to intrude. A place where there are no distractions...nothing fancy...a place where you can think...and be still...

With your eyes closed...see the emptiness around you...like a void. Feel the loneliness.

Know how vulnerable you are...how unprotected...you are alone with nothing else around you

And now with your eyes closed...look inside yourself and search for some kind of trust.

In your solitude...can you find any kind of trust within you? Is there someone you trust in?

What kind of trust is it? Who or what have you placed your trust in? What will protect you?

Be aware suddenly that there is someone else nearby and that are not alone.

You look around...but you see no one...you are sure that someone is near...someone that you can't see...yet you feel safe. So just rest and relax a moment and trust your feelings.

Feel the presence of the other person. Feel their goodness and gentleness.

Feel the presence of this person's incredible understanding and forgiveness.

Feel the gentle softness of this love. This feeling is like drawing near to God.

Know that God is with you...that Jesus is with you...even though you don't see him.

Know that God is with you in a special way right now.

And rest in this loving presence of God. Rest and be at peace.

Peace.

And still...even though you can't see the Lord...know that he is near. Very near.

But in a strange way you are still alone.

Quietly reflect by yourself what your real needs are.

Think about what you really desire for yourself...not for anyone else...but something that you really crave and have decided that you want more than anything else.

In this quiet and lonely place...with your imagination...build a scene...like a movie...build a scene that represents how or when you are tempted to satisfy your own inner cravings and desires.

Know that the needs of others will become unimportant...because your desires are stronger than theirs.

PRAYING AS A FAMILY

Know that deep down...you want to have those cravings satisfied.
Perhaps it is as if you are controlled by your craving.

And now you can feel the Lord...Jesus puts his gentle hand on your shoulder. The Lord whispers into your ear. And he tells you that he understands...he knows...because he is just as human as you.

And be at peace.

Is there anything you want to say to Jesus? Anything you would like to?

And now Jesus tells you that he can offer you something better...he can offer you something more important. Be still and watch the picture that Jesus draws in your imagination...of something better that he can give...something better than what you crave.

If you can depend upon the Lord...if you can trust...

Jesus hands you a gift of hope...hope that will keep you strong. And healthy.

Hope...it is now yours...part of you...forever.

And suddenly you are alone again...in that place of plainness.

And with your eyes closed...look inside yourself and find a time when you were unsure.

A time when you were fearful that things wouldn't work out. That something wouldn't be right.

And with your eyes closed...paint that scene like in a movie...so that you stand in that situation again.

Frozen in time so you can see it again...and feel it again.

A time when you wanted to be sure that God would make everything perfect, but you had doubts.

You weren't sure. The doubts were too strong...you were tempted to give up...to despair.

Feel how strong those fears and doubts can be...pressuring you.

But they won't crush you. Because again you can feel the hand of Jesus on your shoulder.

A quiet and gentle whisper in your ear.

And he asks you to trust...because if you let him...he can do wondrous things.

And he stands in the mist of your scene...to show you...to give you just a brief glimpse of what could happen...how he would let it develop if he were given the chance.

Then he whispers in your hear how much he loves you and promises that in the end...he can have something wonderful happen. If you can trust....if you can let him be God...if you have faith.

And then Jesus hands you another gift.

This is a gift of faith to keep you strong.

And to keep you close to God.

Even in times when you have doubts...or are unsure.

Faith to keep you strong....even when things are beyond your control.

Faith.



PRAYING AS A FAMILY

Know that you are filled with the gifts of God.

His gift of hope...his gift of faith...and his incredible gift of love...and feel the divine strength radiating from within you.

Giving you courage and giving you hope.

Jesus promises you that he will always be with you...he will never leave you...even if you can't see him...even if you can't feel him. Always with you.

And be at peace.

Filled with faith, hope, and love from God...slowly return here...still filled with the gifts from God.

When you are ready you may open your eyes and reflect on all that you saw and felt...all that you have just experienced.

And know the gifts God has given to you.

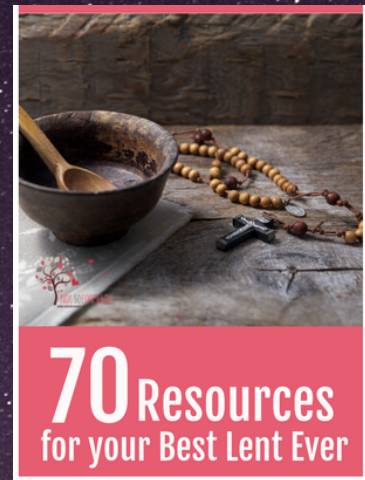
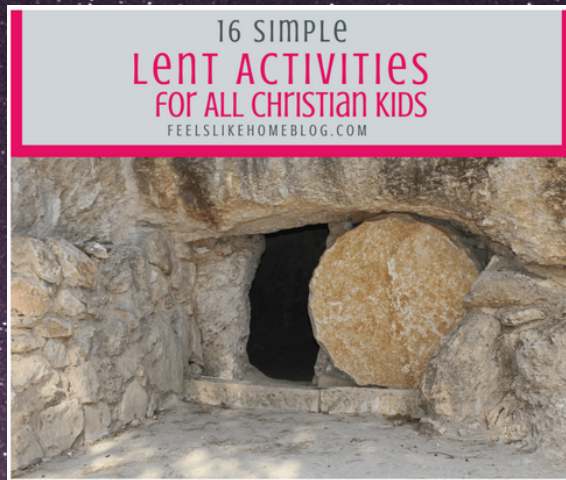
And be at peace.

Peace.

Adapted from <https://www.avemariapress.com/engagingfaith/guided-meditation-temptation-desert>



FAMILY ACTIVITIES



Videos

[Busted Halo: Lent in 3 Minutes](#)

[Lego: Ash Wednesday and Lent in 60 Seconds](#)

[Catholic Kids Media for Lent - Video Series](#)

[Preparing for Lent \(Fr. Mike Schmitz\)](#)

[What's the Purpose of Lent \(Fr. Mike Schmitz\)](#)

[CAFOD: A Lent Prayer for Children](#)

Music

[Primary Kids Lent Songs](#)

[Contemporary Worship Songs for Lent](#)

[Traditional Catholic Choral Lenten Hymns](#)

[Promises: TRIBL](#)

[Be Not Afraid: Catholic Artists from Home](#)

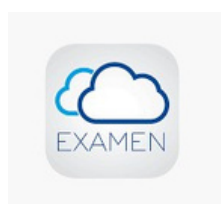
[Shelter Me: Michael Joncas & Spiritu](#)

[Divine Mercy Chaplet](#)

WORTH EXPLORING



Christian Meditation – The Prayer of 3 “S’s”



ONLINE / LIVESTREAM MASSES

Catholic TV

Daily at 12:30 pm EST

St. Michael's Cathedral

Daily at 6:30 am, 11:00 am, 3:00 pm & 10:30 pm (all times EST)

Salt and Light TV

Daily at 6:30 am, 11:00 am, 3:00 pm & 10:30 pm (all times EST)

Radio Maria

Monday and Thursday at 12:30 pm EST

Daily TV Mass

(Loretto Abbey Chapel)

Fr. Rob Galea's YouTube Channel

Archdiocese of Toronto: Day of Confession:

<https://www.archtoronto.org/confession>

GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Visit us at: Nurturing Our Catholic Community,

Contact us at: ncc.team@tcdsb.org



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