

A rustic wooden cross is positioned diagonally across a dark, weathered wooden plank. The cross is made of light-colored, weathered wood with visible grain and some surface wear. In the upper left corner, there are several autumn leaves in shades of red, orange, and brown, some partially overlapping the wooden plank. The overall lighting is warm and directional, creating strong highlights and shadows that emphasize the textures of the wood and leaves.

Lent

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Lent: What is it? Why is it?



Take a Moment



Take a moment, close your eyes and say “Lent.”

What are the first things that come to mind?

Penance

Purple

Fish

Ashes

Fasting

Sacrifice

No Movies or

No Candy

Catechumenate = People Just Becoming Christians

The more we think of “Lent” and “Baptism” the more we understand the Churches selection of the readings.

When a person came to the end of the Catechumenate period there was a 40-day retreat.

The retreat was in preparation for the sacraments of initiation Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil.



■ Baptismal Promises

Promises are made at baptism but the real meaning of those promises are only learned in living them each day.

The Sacrament of Marriage is also a parallel case.

The promises and the “I do,” words of the bride and groom are discovered only by living them day by day throughout married life.





The “I Do’s”

Parents are you willing to raise your child in the faith?

Do you reject sin?

Do you reject the glamour of evil and refuse to be mastered by sin?

Do you reject Satan?

Do you believe in God?

Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church?

The communion of saints, the forgiveness of sin,

The resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

It takes a lifetime to truly realize the meaning of those “I do’s.”

Life Giving and Life Changing



Baptism is a life giving & a life changing experience.

Baptism is the reason that you came to this class.

Marriage is a life giving and life changing experience.

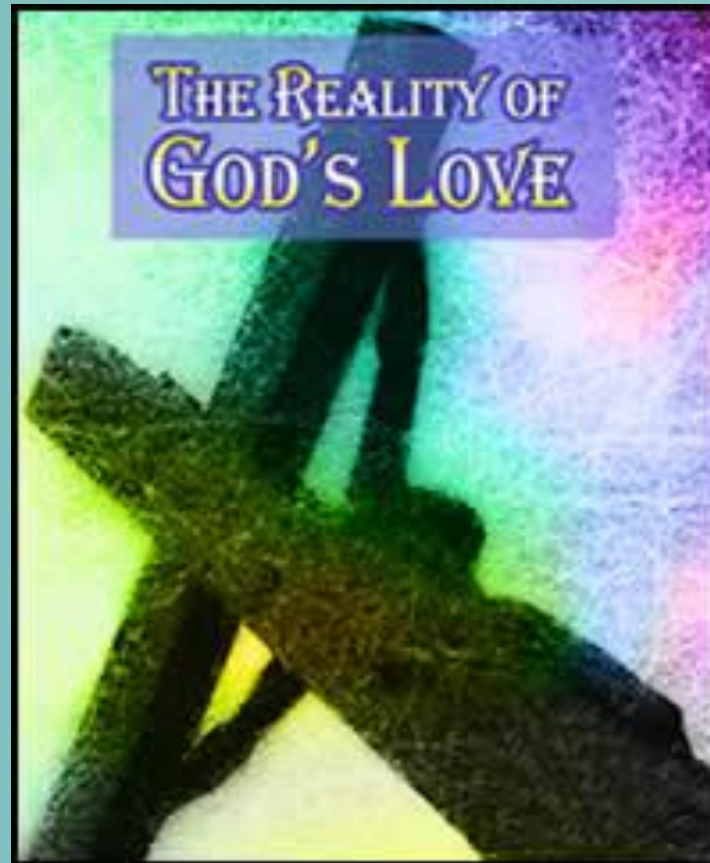
God gave us the gift of life in our children.

He changed our lives in the way we interact with each other, our children and the world.

What Does The Word Lent Mean?

In many languages, the word "Lent" actually means "fast."

This is where the custom of giving up something for Lent originated.





Why 40 Days?

The number recalls Noah's flood,
When evil drowned and
The earth was washed clean.

It also calls to mind the 40 years of preparation of the
Hebrews before entering the Promised Land.

Moses stayed on the Mountain of God forty days (Exodus
24:18 and 34:28),



40 is a traditional number of discipline, devotion, and preparation in the Bible

The spies were in the land for forty days (Numbers 13:25),

Elijah traveled forty days before he reached the cave where he had his vision (1 Kings 19:8),

Nineveh was given forty days to repent (Jonah 3:4), and most importantly,

Prior to undertaking his ministry, Jesus spent forty days in the wilderness praying and fasting (Matthew 4:2).

■ But Lent Is More Than 40 Days

Lent is actually 46 rather than 40 days.

Why?

Because the 40 days of Lent are supposed to be days of fasting, which means days of discipline and self-restraint.

But Sunday, the Lord's Day, should never be a day of fasting, but a day of celebration!

Some call all Sundays, "Little Easter."

So each Sunday we suspend our Lenten disciplines and celebrate.

Lent is 40 "fasting" days spread out over a total of 46 days beginning on Ash Wednesday.



The History Of Lent

Lent became a 40-day season in the fourth century from three merging sources.

1. The ancient paschal fast that began as a two-day observance before Easter.
2. The Catechumenate preparation process for the Sacraments of Initiation to be celebrated at the Easter Vigil.
3. The Order of Penitents, that sought a second conversion for those that had fallen back to serious sin after Baptism.

Scriptures



Lent, then, is our time of fasting, prayer, resisting temptation and repentance.

The Lenten season is not found anywhere in Scriptures, but it has been a custom, a tradition, which Christians have practiced for most of the last two thousand years.

■ The Lenten Season Is A Journey



That means that at the end of Lent we expect to find ourselves somewhat different than when we started the season.

In every case, it is a time for serious, disciplined self-examination, a time spent in intensive prayer and repentance before the cross of Calvary.



What's The Purpose Of Lent?

The focus of Lent was always threefold:

1. It was a time to prepare new converts for baptism through intensive classes and instruction.
2. It was a time for long-standing Christians to review their lives and renew their commitment to Jesus Christ.
3. It was a time for fallen away Christians to be restored to the faith.



Questions for Self-Reflection.

Am I sharing gladly what I
have with others, especially
the strangers and the poor?

Do I have a gracious and
patient attitude toward
others, especially those who
irritate me?

What sin lurks in my life and
still plagues me?

How is my devotional and
prayer life progressing?

Am I listening to God more
and complaining less?

Am I as thoughtful and
forgiving of family as
others, or do I take my
frustrations out on them?

Do I speak up for the
maligned and oppressed,
or do I remain silent in
order to remain popular?

Holy Thursday



Lent ends before the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday.

At the same time the Easter Triduum begins.

The Triduum is a three-day celebration of the mysteries of Jesus' passion, death, and Resurrection.

The Church Sanctuary



To represent the dark and serious business of Lent, one custom has been to strip the sanctuary of all flowers, candles, and colors during Lent.

This custom helps us to turn inward and examine ourselves, even as it reminds us of the dark and colorless Sabbath day when Jesus lay dead in the tomb.