



Jubilee Year 2025

The Season of Lent: A season of hope & growth

Tracing ashes on our forehead on this Wednesday we begin forty precious days to open ourselves up most particularly to God and to examine ourselves in the presence of the one who created us, knows us, and loves us. In Lent we face ourselves and learn not to be afraid of our sinfulness. Taking some time to get ready for Lent will ensure that we do not miss the first or second week of Lent. First of all, we need to find some quiet time to reflect on our life.

We should start by asking ourselves some questions and by making some preparations. “What does God want to give me this lent?” This question may require that I slow down a bit and listen to my inner spirit. Lent is not primarily about giving something up, rather it is a time to grow. So the questions we need to ask are - how can I be a better person, a better Christian? What stops me from becoming a better person? Is it my habits or attitude or taking things for granted or a lack of self- respect? Choose one or two things from the Lent resolution sheet so that God may shape your life in his own image.

For some of us, it could be committing ourselves to giving up judging others or any unhealthy habit. Whatever we choose to do, it should be graced with prayer. We all should try to become a better person to others in our attitude, words and action. Sometimes it may not be that easy as we might have been hurt by others. But the Lord who carried the cross will help us to rise above our hurt and bring healing.

For many of us, the choice may not be to give something up, but to add something to our daily lives during Lent. We may commit ourselves to extra prayer. We may decide to do some service to the poor and the Church during Lent. We may choose to increase our almsgiving to the poor or perhaps it might be something we choose not to do, for instance some might choose not to eat out so often and to give the amount saved to the poor.

Whether it is fasting, abstaining or other acts of penance, our whole desire should be to use these means to help us grow closer to our Lord and prepare ourselves “to celebrate the paschal mystery with minds and hearts renewed.” (First Preface of Lent)

May our Lord bless us all on this journey ahead!

Some Suggestions for Lent

Try to practice at least one or two from each.

1. PRAYER

- ▶ If possible go to daily Mass - 9.30am or 6.30pm.
- ▶ Join the Parish for Stations of the Cross, Fridays at 10am or 7pm.
- ▶ Make an effort to say Morning & Evening Prayers (see the booklet)
- ▶ Join the Parish for Morning Prayer on Monday-Saturday at 9AM
- ▶ SPEND TIME WITH THE BLESSED SACRAMENT during Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament: Mon-Sat 8.30am and Friday 5.15-6.15pm
- ▶ Join the Parish for Rosary after morning Mass on Mon-Sat and before Masses on Sunday.
- ▶ Join the Parish for Lenten Retreat on 14th, 15th & 16th April 6pm-8pm.
- ▶ On this Jubilee Year, please visit the Grotto and say the prayers to receive Jubilee Year Indulgence.

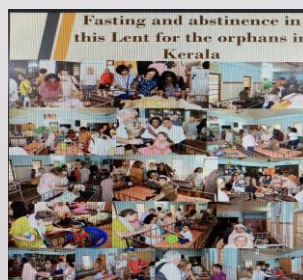


2. FASTING & ABSTINENCE

- ▶ Try to fast on Fridays in Lent.
- ▶ Try to avoid meat on Fridays in Lent or for the whole of Lent.
- ▶ Try to give up something you like most.
- ▶ Try to limit/avoid social media.

3. ALMSGIVING: This year as we journey in this season of Lent, we also keep in our prayers the poor and disadvantaged.

- ▶ Share with the poor the money that you may save by giving up something or fasting.
- ▶ If you have nothing to share with the poor, pray for the children of two orphanages (Anugrahasadan and Snehajyothi Sisubhavan) in Kerala, India whom we are supporting in Lent.



MORNING SPIRITUAL EXERCISE

You should make a firm resolution when and where you will say this prayer, preferably before breakfast. You must offer it as follows:

1. *Thank God* and adore him with all your heart for doing the favour of keeping you alive during the past night. If you have fallen into any kind of sin in the course of the night, ask his forgiveness. God will forgive you and you will start the day with a pure and holy heart.

2. *Realise* that the present day is a gift from God given to you in order that during it you may gain eternal life. Make a deliberate decision to use the day well for this purpose.

3. *Look ahead* to the various sorts of business and conversations you are likely to have and the people you are likely to meet during the day. *Foresee also the temptations* to offend God which you may meet on these occasions: by anger or vanity or gossip or any other improper act.

Prepare yourself by a deliberate decision to use well *the means* to avoid these temptations so that you will not lose your salvation and the glory of God. It is not enough to make this deliberate decision. *You must prepare the means to put it into practice effectively.* For example, I foresee that I shall have to deal with a person who is excitable and easily gets angry. Then I will be determined not to lose control and annoy him/her. Moreover, I shall prepare gentle words to calm his/her anger or get the help of someone who can do so.

2. After doing this, humbly place yourself before God. Acknowledge that, by yourself, you are not able to do what you have decided, either to avoid evil or to do good. As though you are holding your heart in your hands, offer it to God together with all your intentions. Implore him to take you into his care and to give you the strength to serve him. Do this by using, in silence, the following or similar words: *"Lord, look at this poor and wretched heart, which through your goodness has conceived many good desires. Alas, I am too weak and worthless to put them into practice, unless you grant your heavenly blessing. I humbly ask for it through the merits of the Passion of your Son. To his honour I consecrate this day to you"*. Pray to Our Lady, your Guardian angel and the Saints to look after you during the day.

Make all these spiritual acts briefly and earnestly, before leaving your room if possible. Thus, by means of this exercise, whatever you do throughout the day will be watered by God's blessing.

EVENING PRAYER AND EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Before your evening meal you are to have a spiritual supper or at least a devout light meal. I strongly encourage you to do this with your family. There is nothing better than prayer to unite your family. Ask your children to lead you in a short prayer, if at all before your meal; it may be a decade of the Rosary, a Divine Mercy Chaplet or an Our Father. Do whatever you prefer.

Even if you are unable to say your evening prayer, never omit the Examination of Conscience before going to bed. How do you do it? These steps may help you:

1. *Thank God* for taking care of you during the day that is over.
2. *Examine your day*, preferably hour by hour. To do this more easily, call to mind *where you have been, with whom, and what you have been doing*.
3. If you find *you have done good* or others have done you good, thank God for it. If, on the contrary, *you have done wrong*, in thought, word or deed, ask his pardon. Never go to bed with a heavy heart. Decide to confess it at the first opportunity.
4. After that, entrust to divine providence your body and spirit, your family and relatives. Ask Our Lady, your Guardian Angel and the Saints to watch over you, to take care of you. With God's blessing go to rest with a light heart and a clear conscience.

Through the morning exercise you open your heart and spirit to the Sun of Justice and through the evening exercise you close them to the darkness of hell.