

Some images have links.

Yet even now, says the Lord,
return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping,
and with mourning;
rend your hearts and not your clothing.

Joel 2:121



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

Few times in the Christian year call us to reflect on transformational change like Lent leading toward Easter. Springtime is lush with rebirth, new beginnings, and new growth. Too often, however, we want to race to the Easter Resurrection without fully embracing the Lenten process that leads there. Lent reflects the forty days that Jesus wandered in the wilderness — tempted by Satan — in readiness for a ministry destined to end in tragedy. Few of us can relate to the level of sacrifice and commitment that Jesus displayed in his forty days, yet Lent provides us with an opportunity to deepen our spirituality by engaging in regular discipline from Ash Wednesday through Easter Sunday. The wilderness — the desert days of Lent — is the true path toward spiritual transformation. [Read more...](#)

[Pope Francis](#) takes his inspiration from the Gospel account of the Transfiguration, proclaimed each year on the Second Sunday of Lent. As with the chosen disciples at the Transfiguration, Jesus "takes us with Him to a place apart" during the season of Lent. "Lenten penance," he writes, "is a commitment, sustained by grace, to overcoming our lack of faith and our resistance to following Jesus on the way of the cross."

This requires effort, sacrifice, and concentration, which are also requirements for the Synodal Journey; and therefore we can say that "our Lenten journey is 'synodal' since we make it together along the same path, as disciples of the one Master."

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 penitence 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

Archdiocese of Toronto | www.archtoronto.org
 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.
- 6. Abstain**
Give up meat or other desirable foods during Lent, especially on Friday, the day of Christ's saving death on the cross.
- 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.
- 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!

Archdiocese of Toronto | www.archtoronto.org
 Text from Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops' "Living Lent"

For more infographics please visit the [Archdiocese of Toronto website](http://www.archtoronto.org)

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.**

Archdiocese of Toronto | www.archtoronto.org
 IMAGES: OSHAWA'S ST. HEDWIG'S PARISH DURING LENT AND STAINED GLASS WINDOW FROM ST. ANSELM'S PARISH, TORONTO



RESOURCES AND PRAYERS

Development and Peace, the official development organization of the Canadian Catholic Church, has created several resources to help families prepare for Lent, aligned with their new campaign, "Stand for the Land". These resources include:

- solidarity calendar
- way of the cross
- weekly reflections
- prayers of the faithful
- and many more!



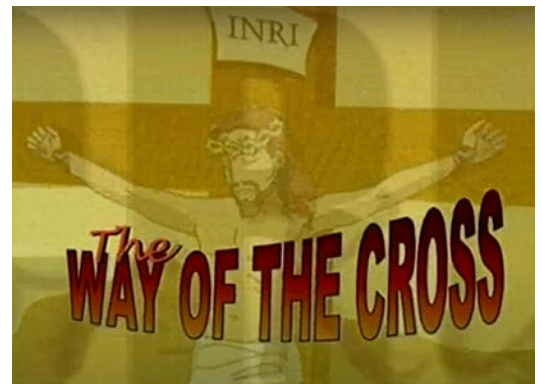
Have you ever thought of Lent as a yearly second chance? Each year the Church gives us six weeks to take a long, loving look at our lives to see if our values and priorities are in line with God's desires for us. Since most of us find that we've wandered from God's path, Lent becomes that second change, or do-over, to "return to God with our whole heart".

Please visit [Loyola Press](#) to find suggestions for new traditions and to read about the wisdom gained from various Lenten practices.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

The Stations of the Cross, also known as the Way of the Cross, is traditionally prayed every Friday of Lent. It can be traced back to the 4th century when pilgrims would visit Jerusalem to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. There are traditionally 14 stations that highlight the Passion of Christ with time for reflection and prayer.

- [Stations of the Cross for Children](#) (brief text)
- [Stations of the Cross](#) by Loyola Press (brief text with images)

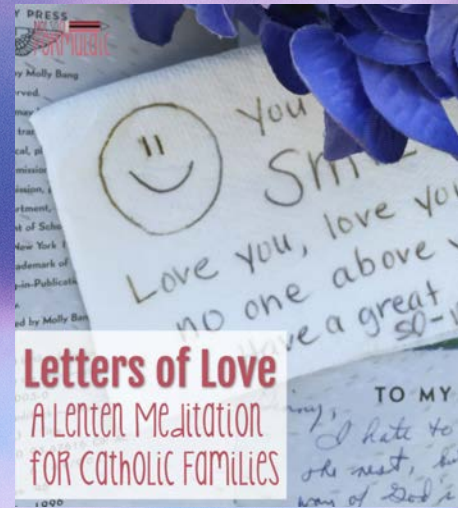


THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

The Sacrament of Reconciliation invites us to reflect on how we are living our life and how we can become better people - our best version that God calls us to be. Consider the following:

- [Examination of Conscience for Children](#)
- [Examination of Conscience for Teenagers](#)
- [101 Practical Fasting Ideas for Lent](#)

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”



**LOYOLA
PRESS.**



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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NCC YouTube Channel

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