



Lent: Prayer, Fasting and Giving: Spring Training for Catholics

Every year baseball players attend spring training camp to renew their basic practices and skills. Both the first-year rookie and senior veteran of the team practice their basic skills together. It is a humbling experience for all as the home run champion from last year practices bunting with the newbie.

Each year Catholics return to the basics along with those entering the Church at Easter. Lent is the forty-day period of preparation from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday that highlights three basic practices of faith, namely: prayer, fasting and giving alms. Young and old... from the senior veterans in the choir to the neophytes in the RCIA... are called to discern what practices they will renew at Lent. Like Spring Training for baseball players, it is a humbling experience, yet it is a time of essential renewal and a return to basic practices. What we hope to practice naturally year-round we practice intentionally during lent.

Each of the three practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving; while personal acts, are relational. In Tobit 12:8 they are outlined as the three pillars of Jewish faith practice. And Jesus, while talking of each of these three individually and as a group, also draws them together as righteousness. These practices of prayer, fasting and giving make things right again regarding our three most basic relationships.

Prayer fortifies and renews our central relationship with God. Lent gives us a time of heightened prayer life. I encourage you not only to do more but go deeper into prayer. If you don't have a basic rhythm of daily prayer in your life start small. Make a morning offering: "Lord be with me this day", and then a daily reflection of where God was each evening. Next, reflecting on Scripture is central. If you don't reflect on Scriptures, start with a simple podcast like "Pray-as-you-go". Daily Mass combines both a daily offering and reflection on scripture while providing a chance to slow down and enter the celebration of the eucharist in a much more intimate and personal way. With reflection I am sure there is some deepening of prayer God is calling you to. It does not matter what you do... only that God will be waiting there for you.

Fasting resets our relationships with things. In a culture where our value is determined by the things we can consume, it is good to take a break from consumption. It could be anything we consume, like screen time to social media, or it could be even food itself. Fasting is meant to awaken our true hungers and appetites. Often, we fill ourselves up with stuff that does not nourish us.

Giving renews and restores our relationships with others. Almsgiving is probably the most practiced, yet most misunderstood, of all our lent practices. In its Jewish roots it was meant to build relationship and restore balance in society. Unfortunately giving alms can be guilt based and meant to make us feel better instead of helping another. Today I can just click a button and give; yet, as a faith practice it is meant to be a gift of self-giving to restore the dignity of another. I encourage you to give close to home, sharing your time, treasure, and talent.

I encourage everyone to reflect and discern what you will personally do for Lent. It will be different for everyone, yet it is something we do together as a Church.

Lent and Easter 2024

Ash Wednesday – February 14

St. Anne's – 8:00 AM
Holy Angels' – 12:00 PM
Our Lady of Sorrows' – 5:30 PM

St. Mary's – 5:30 PM
St. Anne's – 7:00 PM

Stations of the Cross

St. Anne's – Fridays after 8 AM
Mass

St. Mary's – Fridays, 7:00 PM

Holy Angels' – Fridays, 7:00 PM

Our Lady of Sorrows' – Thursdays
after 6:30 PM Mass

Easter Tridium

Holy Thursday – March 28

St. Anne's – 7:00 PM

Good Friday – March 29

St. Mary's – 3:00 PM
Our Lady of Sorrows' – 3:00 PM

Holy Angels' – 3:00 PM
St. Anne's – 3:00 PM

Holy Saturday – March 30

Holy Angels' Easter Vigil – 8:30 PM

Easter Sunday – March 31

St. Helen's – 8:30 AM
Holy Angels' – 9:00 AM
Our Lady of Sorrows' – 9:30 AM

St. Mary's – 10:00 AM
St. Anne's – 11:00 AM